The UNESCO COURIER

DOUBLE ISSUE JULY-AUGUST 1994

encounters with other ways of life

surprising strangers

places...
GHANA, TRINIDAD,
CHINA, SENEGAL,
SIBERIA, MEXICO...

people...
PAVEL LOUNGUINE,
ALEKSANDAR PETROVIC

photos...
FACES OF TIBET

INTERVIEW WITH
JOSÉ DONOSO
ENVIRONMENT
CORAL: TAKING THE PULSE OF THE PLANET
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Africa arise

Rise up
from the sleep
that keeps you weak
and voiceless,
sing your song,
recite the verse
waiting on your lips.
Show the new sap
rising
from your deep roots
towards the ripened fruit
of your tempered heart.
Take flight, Africa,
with your own wings.
Spread
your enormous strength
for centuries withheld
in your warm hands
now freed
for the embrace.
Today your flight
is imperative,
it is essential
to reach
together
for the first time
the same side,
the shore
which is still
denied us.
Unchain yourself
from lenders
and misers,
and trace the road
you wish to follow,
the moment
of meeting,
of memory and oblivion.
Your diversity
which is your wealth
must unite
with only
the light of dawn
as helper
to guide you to the
shining horizon
we long for.
Africa:
Wake up!
and reveal
the immensity
of your dreaming soul.

FEDERICO MAYOR
Yamoussoukro, 7 February 1994

Signs and Swirls
(1992), oil on canvas
by the Senegalese artist
Souleymane Keita.

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Special consultant for this issue:
Myriam Smadja

The UNESCO COURIER

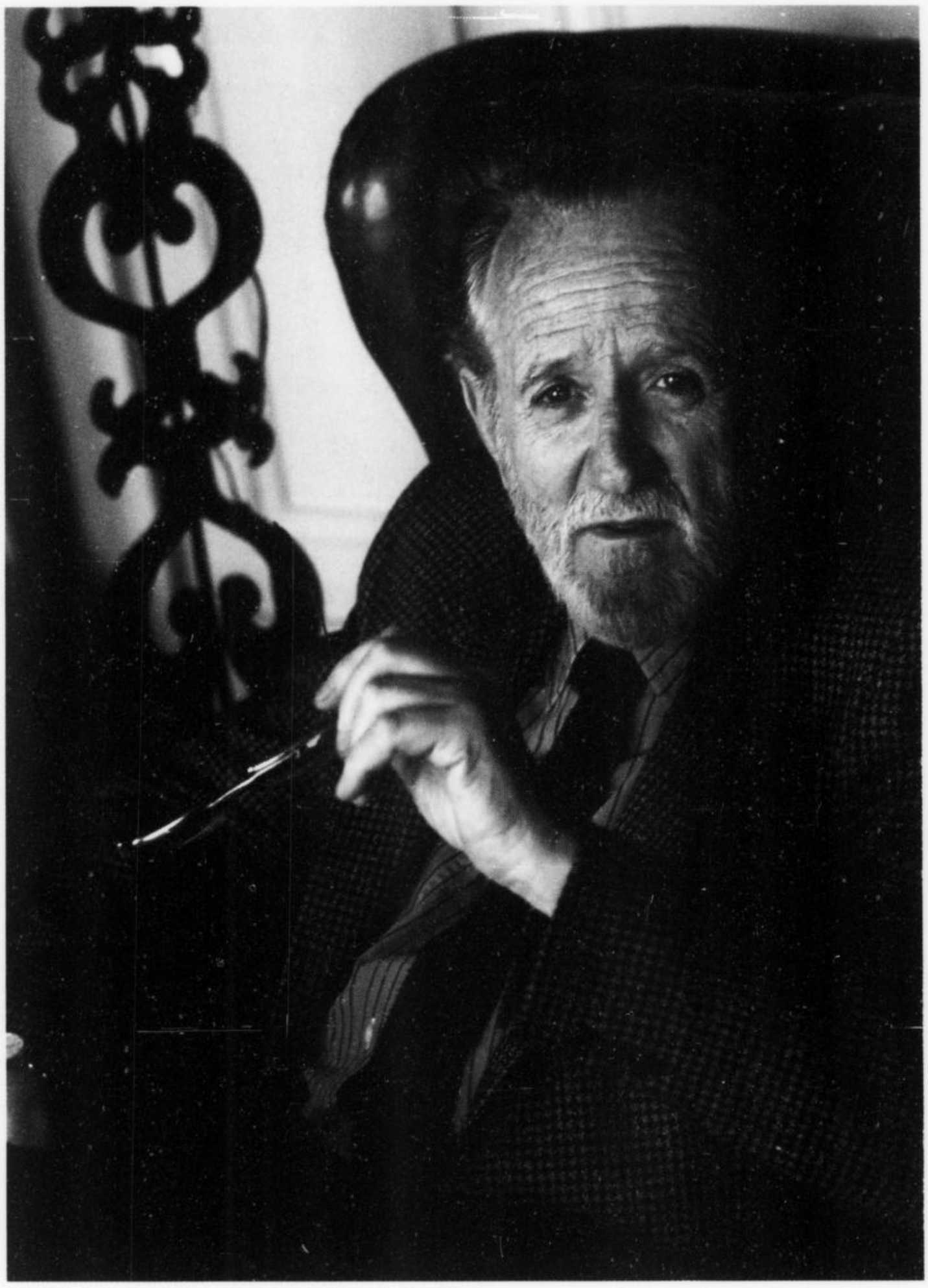
47th year — Published monthly in 32 languages and in Braille

"The Governments of the States parties to this Constitution on behalf of their peoples declare,
"that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed ...
"that a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.
"For these reasons, the States parties ... are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives...."
EXTRACT FROM THE PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF UNESCO, LONDON, 16 NOVEMBER 1945

INTERVIEW

JOSÉ DONOSO

talks to Fernando Ainsa



The Chilean writer José Donoso is a leading Latin American novelist. After teaching English literature in the United States and travelling in many countries, he lived in Spain until 1980, when he returned to Chile. His works have been translated into many languages. Among those translated into English are *The Obscene Bird of Night* (1979), *A House in the Country* (1984), and *The Garden Next Door* (1992). Here he explains his conception of the writer's role in society.

FERNANDO AINSA,
Uruguayan writer, is director of the UNESCO Collection of Representative Works.

■ ***In the minds of critics and readers alike, the Latin-American novel no longer occupies the dominant position that it held at the time of the "explosion" of novel-writing in the 1960s, although the great writers of that period—Gabriel García Márques, Carlos Fuentes, Mario Vargas Llosa and yourself—are still publishing regularly, and a new generation of writers has emerged in every one of the countries of Latin America.***

—A clear distinction has to be drawn between, on the one hand, the ballyhoo and commercial exploitation surrounding the 1960s explosion, which I denounced in my personal account of it (*Historia personal del "boom"*, 1972), and on the other the grand ambitions that the writers of the period entertained to write the "total" novel. One thing that is certain is that, in the last ten years, Latin-American novelists have abandoned their dream of upholding, so to speak, the great blueprints for society that were a characteristic feature of the political and cultural life of the 1960s and 1970s.

Those blueprints were an integral part of the "cosmogonic ideologies" that proposed universal, radical solutions and stemmed from an unquestioning belief in the power of the will.

In Latin America, that period was marked by a "Bolivarian" dream of the continent's literary unity. At the same time, each novel aimed to be a literary "superproduction" by virtue of its encyclopaedic accumulation of knowledge. Conversely, during the 1980s and even more so in the present decade, novels have ceased to offer the sort of absolute and all-embracing vision represented in the weighty tomes that many authors of my generation perpetrated, myself included. Our aim was not only to interpret the world but to change it as well.

■ ***Yet you have never been one for certainties. You deal rather in doubt, ambiguity and contradictions.***

—Contradictions and doubts that nevertheless formed part of an ambitious self-appointed task, that of saying "everything" in a novel that aimed to be representative of a particular moment in history, a moment whose special, unique nature seemed to us to be beyond doubt. History is now perceived subjectively and deciphered through the individual; what it has gained in relativity it has lost in "certainty". Novelists today present individual life-stories, which may be more or less representative, but they no longer have any pretensions to give lessons to their readers. Their characters are helpless, often loners and disoriented. We have no place to go to get warm now as we used to do, when ideology gave us a roof over our heads: nowadays, and I think this is all to the good, we are exposed to the elements, no longer sheltered by revealed truths from the storms of life.

■ ***That is true for the characters, but what about the authors? What are their points of reference now? People have to believe in something, after all.***

—Literature and aesthetics have taken the place of ideologies, and it's not the first time this has happened. I am thinking, for instance, of John Milton, the author of *Paradise Lost*, tugged this way and that by the forces of the Renaissance and those of puritanism. His cultural references were those of his time: the recently rediscovered Greek and Latin poets, the writings of the Fathers of the Church, the Bible—he was writing for a readership steeped in the Scriptures rather than for one that shared his political beliefs. At times of crisis, it is the gossamer threads spun by the authors of the past that hold writers back from the brink of the existential void. It is this cultural heritage that helps them to go on living. The works of the past are our real strength and stay: it is on them that we lean to write new ones, especially when all the other certainties totter and tremble.

■ ***But the crisis also means that individuals are tempted to withdraw into their shells, to create a safe hideaway for themselves. Everything points to the fact that we are "cocooning" ourselves, to use a favourite American expression, adopting a mode of behaviour compounded of selfishness and cosiness, isolation and an absence of solidarity.***

—I don't know which is worse, individual cocooning or the collective cocooning in ideological certainties that used to provide us with answers to every question. In any case, it is a very healthy development that certain barriers have come down and certain definitions have been challenged. I am thinking in particular of the little self-contained worlds created by the disciples of the various "sects" that have had such an influence on modern thought, from Freud to Lacan or from Marx to Althusser, or the jargon used by some critics, which is impenetrable except to the initiates of their own literary coterie! The shackles have all fallen from us and it seems that nothing else has yet come along to take their place. The positive side to this, in my opinion, is that we find ourselves in a new situation, beset with questions we cannot answer.

■ ***Why should writers have all the answers anyway?***

—This is perhaps typical of Latin-American intellectual life. Importuned by the realities of the world around them, writers feel constantly obliged to make statements and take stands. The worst of it is that many of them feel it their "duty" to voice an opinion on everything that happens in their country and elsewhere in the world. Intellectuals in our part of the world are "know-alls" who feel free to hold forth from the pulpit on a whole range of topics, from economics to current political affairs, whereas European writers tend rather to concentrate on the work in hand, believing, quite rightly, that the cobbler should stick to his last. So many "prophets" have come a cropper by discussing subjects they know nothing about!

"Novelists today present individual life-stories that may be more or less representative, but they no longer have any pretensions to give lessons to their readers."

■ ***Would it be true to say that the idea, so fashionable not long ago in Latin America,***

of the writer grappling with the realities of "the here and now" is today in crisis?
—Every writer is obliged to live with the uncertainties of his own times. It is something inevitable but not specifically Latin-American. The question "Who are we?" is implicit in all literature. But it should be remembered that writers must always be, at least to some extent, outsiders. If they are not so by nature, they must be able, albeit at some personal cost, to distance themselves from anything that would identify them too closely with a particular group, ideology or class, or with their country. One should be wary of the idea of belonging. Outsiders see things differently. This is precisely what the marginal characters in my books, those who are "excluded from the banquet of life", all say.

■ ***Chilean writers, in spite of everything and even in the darkest hours of the Pinochet dictatorship, have always maintained strong emotional ties to their country. The "garden next door" from which one of your novels takes its title is that of childhood and the homesickness that is the backdrop to all your books.***
—Chilean writers do, it is true, have a very special relationship with their country. Even those of us who have lived and worked abroad and could be called "transnational" writers cling to certain images and memories—a secret garden where we find shelter from the inclement weather of the real world. As you know, I am now back living and working in my own country. I am at present putting the finishing touches to a novel, *Sparrows sing in Greek*, set in the Lota coal-mining region; the spare, taut language draws inspiration from the way the miners talk.

■ ***Is that why you went back to Chile in 1980, when the dictatorship was in full swing?***
—That was only part of the reason. It was mainly because I felt that everything that had to be done in Europe had already been done, and people like me were not needed to do what remains to be done. I am firmly convinced of this. I could leave no footsteps behind me in the Old World, but in Chile there is still so much to be done. Of course there was the advantage that in Europe I was anonymous, I could wear various masks to "disguise" myself, I could hide and go unnoticed. In Chile I cannot get away from the image that people have formed of me. Everything is preordained: I have to play out my role as writer—which is not easy when, like me, one is a prey to doubt and uncertainty. But to answer your question, the primary reason why I returned to Chile was homesickness, which gets worse as one gets older and for which there is no remedy.

"Literature and aesthetics have taken the place of ideologies, and it's not the first time this has happened."

■ ***The theme of exile is painfully present in* The Garden Next Door, *published [in Spanish], it is worth pointing out, in 1981, and the theme of homecoming appears in* Desesperanza *("Despair") published in 1986. Is there an autobiographical element in this?***
—Many myths have been woven around the theme of exile. Wherever people go, whatever they do, they take their homeland, their home town, with them, and there is no way of going into voluntary exile from one's own self, whatever some people may think or claim to the contrary. Even the most cosmopolitan traveller remains bound up with his place of origin. As the Greek poet Constantine Cavafy wrote, "You'll always end up in this city". It is worth quoting the whole poem:

You said: "I'll go to another country, go to another shore,
find another city better than this one....
You won't find a new country, won't find another shore.
The city will always pursue you.
You'll walk the same streets, grow old
in the same neighbourhoods, turn grey in these same houses.
You'll always end up in this city. Don't hope for things elsewhere:
*there's no ship for you, there's no road.**

■ ***So in the end it's not such a bad thing to have roots and a home!***
—I have never said it was, despite the fact that Chileans, however deep their roots in the South, of course also feel drawn back to Europe, which, when all is said and done, is a part of their background. The theme of the voyage haunts the works and lives of many Chilean novelists: take *Criollos en París* by Joaquín Edwards Bello, *Los trasplantados* by Alberto Blest Gana or the tradition of the "initiatory voyage" to Europe among nineteenth-century intellectuals. The great Chilean poets have always been great travellers too—Pablo Neruda, Vicente Huidobro, even Gabriela Mistral, despite her profound attachment to the real life of her country! There's nothing like having been out in all weathers to make you appreciate the warmth of hearth and home. That's why we are now in such a state of happy uncertainty, torn between the urge to leave and wanting to stay. ■

"Writers must always be, at least to some extent, outsiders."

*"The city", from C.P. Cavafy, *Collected Poems*, translated by Edmund Keeley & Philip Sherrard, Chatto & Windus, London, 1975.

SURPRISING STRANGERS

by Martin Even
Writer and journalist

Societies have always allocated a special place to the stranger who comes to them from elsewhere. In Antiquity he would have been a navigator, a merchant, or an exile. In Athens, before the city-state made a distinction between "barbarians" (foreigners) and "metics" (resident aliens) strangers were protected by the gods, especially Apollo, himself a god in exile, and to enjoy the "inviolability of supplicants" they had to carry in the crook of their left arm freshly cut olive branches bound by narrow white strips of cloth. In those far-off times a Phoenician who found himself in Athens, a Cypriot who sailed to Delos, was a man apart, not necessarily regarded sympathetically. For Aristophanes, a false and rascally individual was someone who "behaved like an Egyptian". One of the first great heroes of mythology was Odysseus, an outsider who sailed from island to island, blown far from home by the wind of fate.

Then the dimensions of the world grew wider. Great conquerors like Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, the Arab Muslim general Khaled Ibn al-Walid, Genghis Khan and the Mogul emperor Akbar redrew the map of the earth. The quest for the Indies took Marco Polo to China and Christopher Columbus to the Americas, dreaming of the gold of Cipango. When in the present century the Malian sage Amadou Hampâté Bâ said that "the whole universe is our planet", he was only one small step ahead of today's media explosion in which image-hungry cameras capture dramatic events as they happen and beam them instantly to the four corners of the earth. But barriers aplenty still continue to exist . . . great walls, iron curtains, homeless peoples and travellers without papers.

This double issue of the *Unesco Courier* contains reports of encounters between people from different lands and cultures. It explores the freshness and spontaneity of their reactions as they find themselves at close quarters with unfamiliar ways of life. A Siamese ambassador visits the court of the Sun King. A member of Trinidad's Indian community feels at home in Canada. The Inuit are seen through Russian eyes. A Dayak traveller from Borneo meets the Koreans of China. In Paris, a group of young women from countries of the South talk among themselves of love and marriage. . . .

Here are travellers intrigued by new ways that they try to translate into their own terms, getting to know strangers through an effort of comprehension that, however slightly, changes their own way of seeing the world. ■

Elvis visits a neighbouring chief.

Elvis Johnson-Idan is a man with two lives. For eleven months of the year, he works as the parks manager of a London municipality, spending the weekends relaxing with his wife Elizabeth and their three children. In December and January, however, Elvis is usually to be found in his birthplace, a little village in Ghana where he reigns supreme as Nana Otumayin Kofi Idan I, Brahene of Jukwaa. George Darley-Doran accompanied him on his most recent visit.

elvis *the African*

by George Darley-Doran

1 THE RETURN OF THE CHIEF
Rendez-vous in Jukwaa

Some time ago I came across a small item in a London newspaper that went as follows:

"King Gets Back to his Parkland

"Elvis Johnson-Idan, alias Nana Elvis of Jukwaa, was back in his job as head of Brent Council's parks department yesterday, after having been made a chief of his native Fanti tribe in Ghana. 'It was fascinating,' reported the 37-year-old chief upon his return. 'I was absolutely spell-bound by it all. On one day I had to bathe in a wooden tub filled with herbs to tone up my muscles and skin to get me looking my best.' Nana Elvis plans to continue with his job at Brent Council, and visit his tribe once or twice a year. Apart from that, he and his English-born wife, Queen Elizabeth, do not expect their lives to change dramatically. 'We still shop at Sainsbury's', Queen Elizabeth admitted last night."

I decided to track down this Anglo-African chief. I called up the Council in the northwest London suburb of Brent and was put through to Mr. Johnson-Idan. He could not have been friendlier when I told him of my wish to meet him in order to discuss "a project". Several days later, I found myself in a big, drab council building.

Elvis Johnson-Idan welcomed me into his office. He was of average height, on the portly side, and his round face was characterized by a pair of sharp but limpid eyes. His voice was understated but musical and full of laughter. He had the ability to make one feel entirely at ease and we were soon on first-name terms.

Elvis told me his story. He had grown up in a small town on the Ghanaian coast. Both his mother and father were Fantis of "noble" descent, but he had always been fairly oblivious

Elvis among his people.

to this. Well into his adulthood, he left Ghana (and an unsuccessful marriage) to study horticulture in England. He and Elizabeth met at agricultural college and were soon married. He took her back to his country, where he was second in charge at the National Department of Parks and Gardens. After a couple of years in Accra, they returned to England, and settled down. Liz began having children, and their life became more and more independent of his Ghanaian origins. Then, one day, Elvis received the news that his mother had died. Grief-stricken, he returned to his family village, Jukwaa, to attend her funeral. In the course of that visit, he discovered—to his amazement—that the "kingmakers" of his village had been planning for years to make him a chief. This was all the more surprising in that he was the youngest of nine brothers. The situation was thrust upon Elvis, without his being given much say in the matter. Two months later, he went back to Jukwaa with his family and was formally "enstooled" as Nana Otumayin Kofi Idan I, Brahene of Jukwaa-Idankrom.

Elvis explained to me the meaning of his formal name. "Nana" is the title preceding the name of any Fanti, male or female, of noble descent. "Otumayin" (breaker of men) is the name of Elvis's father. "Kofi" means "Friday"; many Fantis are named after the day of their birth. "Brahene" is a designation of chiefdom, signifying that Elvis has special responsibilities for the "youth" of his area. Jukwaa is the name of Elvis's village, and "Idankrom" signifies that the village is the traditional domain of the Idan family; "-krom" can effectively be translated into English as "-ville".

Since the time of his enstoolment, Elvis's life has been a balancing act between his roles as head of Brent Council's Department of Parks and Recreation, husband and father, and Fanti chieftain. He now visits Ghana once or twice a year, usually spending a good part of December and January with his people. This coincides with the anniversary of his enstoolment (27 December) and Jukwaa's usual end-of-year festivities. The rest of Elvis's time is divided between his job in Brent and his family home.

Elvis told us that he had been subject to a considerable amount of media attention at the time of his enstoolment. He had been appalled at the degree of inaccuracy in the various articles written about him. Every paper had its own version of the story. One quality daily had claimed that he was named after Elvis Presley, which is clearly impossible if one considers that Elvis (the chief) was born years before Elvis (the Pelvis) had cut his first single. The most common mistake was that Elvis had been made king of the entire 1.5-million-strong Fanti tribe. He had, in fact, only been made chief of some 20,000 souls.

Several film companies had expressed interest in developing Elvis's story into a full-length movie. With only a few exceptions, he had found their ideas to be banal at best and at worst an offence to his people. One studio had suggested a plot in which his wife would be kidnapped by another tribe and then rescued—amid plenty of jungle combat—by a crack team from the British army. This was not the kind of publicity that Elvis wanted to attract. On the other hand, he was open to anything that would give the world a better idea of the realities of his people, their way of life and the problems they faced.

It was arranged that later in the year I would join Elvis and his family on their annual visit to Jukwaa, where I would have the opportunity to see a modern-day African chieftain at work.

Over the next couple of months I spent a good deal of time piecing together some background information about Ghana in general and the Fantis in particular.

The "stool lands"

I discovered that the Fantis and the better-known Asante (or Ashanti) are two branches of a single tribe originally known as the Akan. Hundreds of years ago, the Akan moved down from the African interior towards the Gulf of Guinea. One group went as far as the central coast of what is now Ghana and evolved into the Fanti tribe. The other group settled down further inland (in the region surrounding what is now Kumasi) and developed into the Asante. The languages of the two tribes became distinct

"After a couple of years in Accra, they returned to England, got married and settled down. Then one day Elvis received the news that his mother had died. Grief-stricken, he returned to his family village, Jukwaa, to attend her funeral. In the course of that visit he discovered—to his amazement—that the 'kingmakers' of his village had been planning for years to make him a chief."

from one another but remained closely related, rather like English and French. The turning point in the history of both tribes came in the late fifteenth century with the arrival of the European traders, who came in search of gold and slaves. From that point on, the Fantis were under constant attack from the Asante, who were intent on capturing a bigger slice of the lucrative coastal trade.

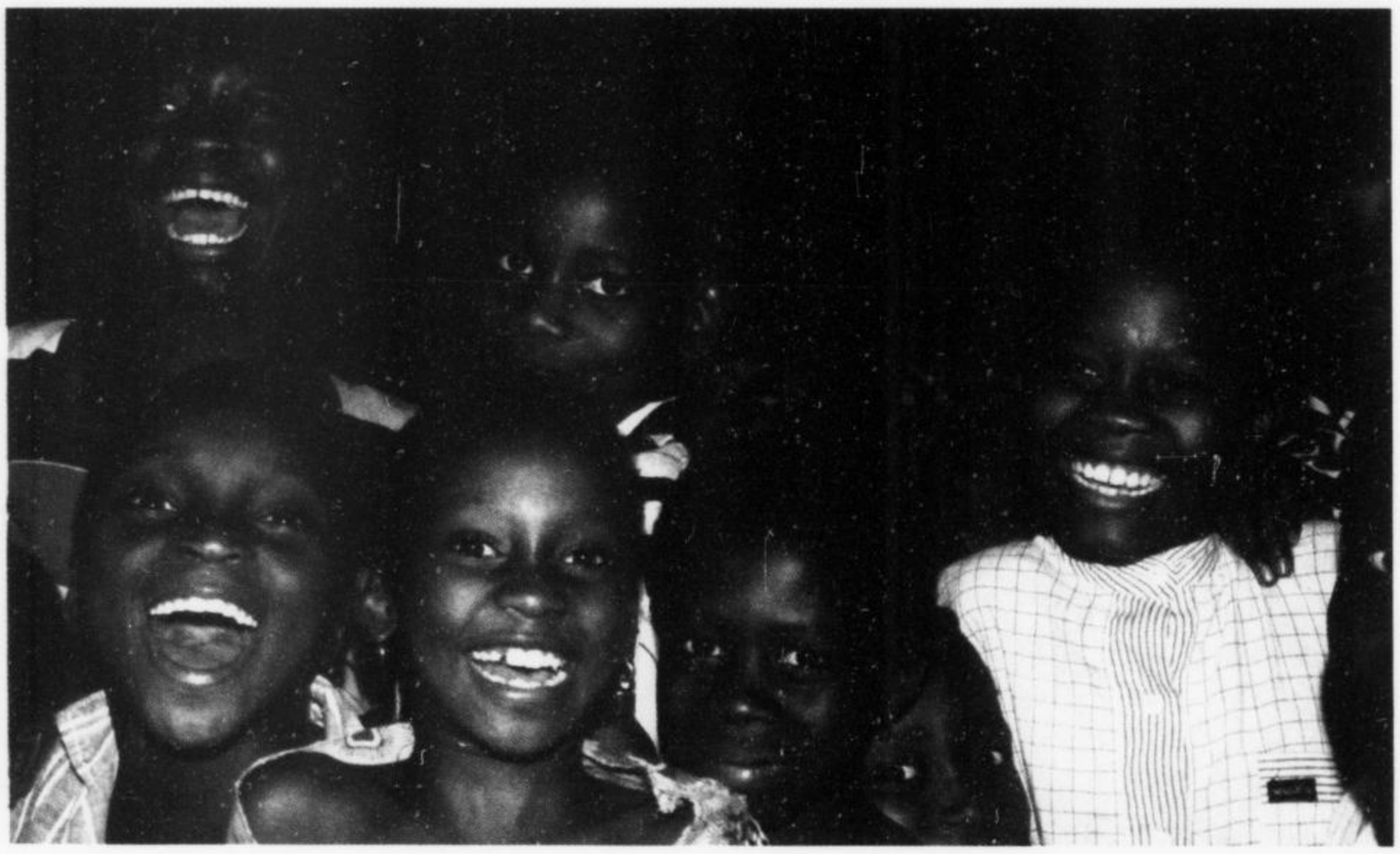
Despite the almost perpetual state of war between the Fantis and the Asantes, their tribal institutions were not at all dissimilar. The bloody conflicts gradually died away, but many of the institutions have survived intact until today. The most important one of all is the tradition of the stool. This is more than just a seat of power, in that the stool embodies the very spirit of the people relating to it. Once a chief has been enstooled, he maintains custody of the stool and is therefore directly responsible for the spiritual well-being of his subjects. Throughout the Asante and Fanti tribes there are countless major and minor stools, each one relating to an area of land and the people living within that area. These areas are known as "stool lands". The chief acts as custodian of these lands, as opposed to owning them outright. It is, and has always been, rare for a chief to "personalize" the stool lands.

The power behind the stool

An important clan will often control more than one stool. The "blue blood" tends to go back a good many generations to the time when lands were originally conquered and settled. Paramount chiefs, chiefs and sub-chiefs are all selected from eligible males of the "noble" clans. Chieftains are not chosen according to their age, but rather to their strength and political skills. The power behind the stool resides with the "kingmakers", the group of elders that decides who is to be enstooled—or in the rare event of abuse, destooled. A Byzantine network of relationships usually exists between the kingmakers, the various ranks of chiefs and those aspiring to chiefdom. In the midst of all this intrigue is the Queen Mother, who often plays an influential role in deciding which of her sons will be enstooled.

Fanti society is based upon kinship and group solidarity. The isolated individual is considered to be a lost and hopeless soul—not just for the course of this life, but for all eternity. This is because the religious ceremonies of the Fanti are directed towards their ancestors, who are considered to exercise surveillance over the living. There is no activity in life that lies outside the scope of religion. It would be rare, for example, to see a Fanti take an alcoholic drink without first offering a libation to the spirits. The Fantis have such a firm belief in the afterlife that if you happened to be standing next to a grave and a Fanti walked by, he would quite

Children in Elvis's village, Jukwaa.



GEORGE DARLEY-DORAN
is a Turkish-born Englishman who lives in London, where he works as a television correspondent.

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CANADA: Renouf Publishing Company Ltd., Central Distribution Centre, 1294 Algoma Road, Ottawa, Ont. K1B 3W8.
Périodica Inc, 1155 Av. Ducharme, Outremont PQ H2V 1E2.

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INDIA: Orient Longman Ltd (Subscriptions Account), Kamani Marg, Ballard Estate, Bombay 400 038.
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ISRAEL: Literary Transactions, Inc c/o Steimatsky Ltd. PO Box 1444, Bneibrak 51114.

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UNITED STATES: Bernan-Unipub, 4611-F Assembly Drive, Lanham, MD 20706 4391.

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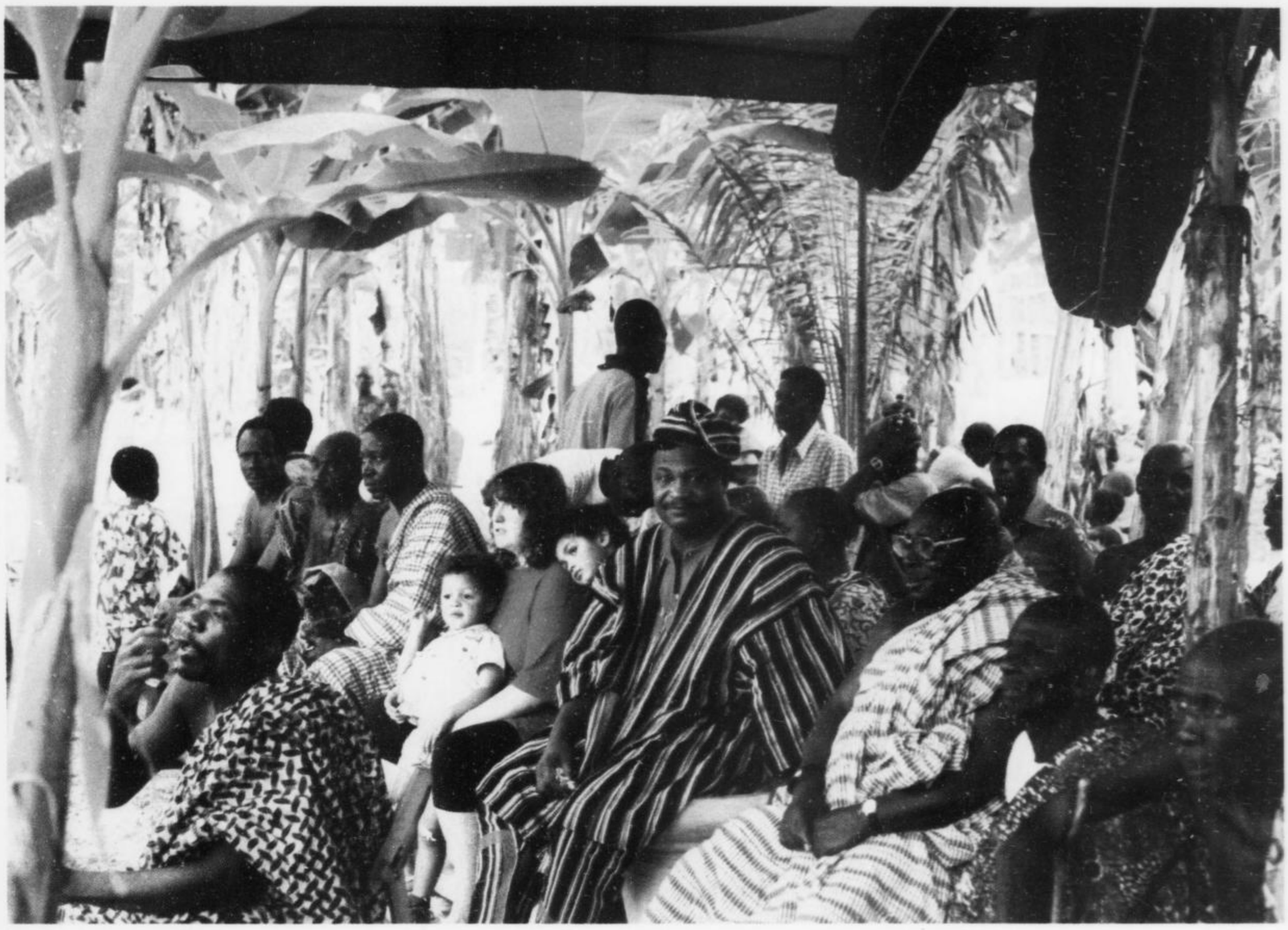


Elvis presides at a traditional gathering.

likely say, "Good day to you both." The exiled Fanti therefore faces the horrifying prospect of being "left out" for ever and ever.

The area occupied by today's Republic of Ghana used to be known by Europeans as the Gold Coast. From the late fifteenth century onwards, the seafaring nations of Europe were in fierce competition for the wealth of this region. All of these powers—Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Prussia, the Netherlands and Portugal—built themselves coastal forts along the Gulf of Guinea. (All twenty-nine of these forts, incidentally, remain standing today.) By the mid-nineteenth century, the Gold Coast had been formally assimilated into the British Empire. It was ruled by colonial governors until 1957, at which point Ghana became the first African nation to gain independence from Britain. Ghana's first president was Kwame ("The Saviour") Nkrumah. He, along with Egypt's Nasser, was perhaps the most vocal Third World leader of his day. But power went to Nkrumah's head. He eventually died in exile in Romania. Ghana went into a downwards spiral. One military junta replaced another, and the country became more and more embroiled in debt. Ghana has only achieved a measure of stability over the last decade.

In December I flew to Accra ahead of Elvis and his family, and stayed for a while with a friend of Elvis named Nathan Austin. I was well looked after. Nathan's wife Pauline introduced me to African food. This usually consisted of yam (a kind of enormous mutant potato), cassava (a smaller root vegetable), plantain (long, savoury green-skinned bananas) or some combination of the three. Being comparatively well off, they would often have some meat or fish on the side. Various friends and relations would come and spend time with them, and the atmosphere was convivial. They all tried to teach me Fanti, and I gave drawing lessons to the children. Pauline's brother Emmanuel told me about his plans to go to America, work and save for five years and then return to Ghana to build his own house.

A resilient, optimistic people

I soon came to like Ghana. I was struck by the lively, joyful and humorous nature of the Ghanaian people. Children would fall about laughing at the sight of a white man in shorts and countless stallholders would beckon me over to say hello. Everywhere, all the time, music was playing. Interspersed with "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas" and "Jingle Bells" was the indigenous music of West Africa, which itself is

"Fanti society is based upon kinship and group solidarity. The isolated individual is considered to be a lost and hopeless soul—not just for the course of this life, but for all eternity. This is because the religious ceremonies of the Fanti are directed towards their ancestors, who are considered to exercise surveillance over the living."

influenced by a whole range of different styles: pop, disco, gospel, even country & western.

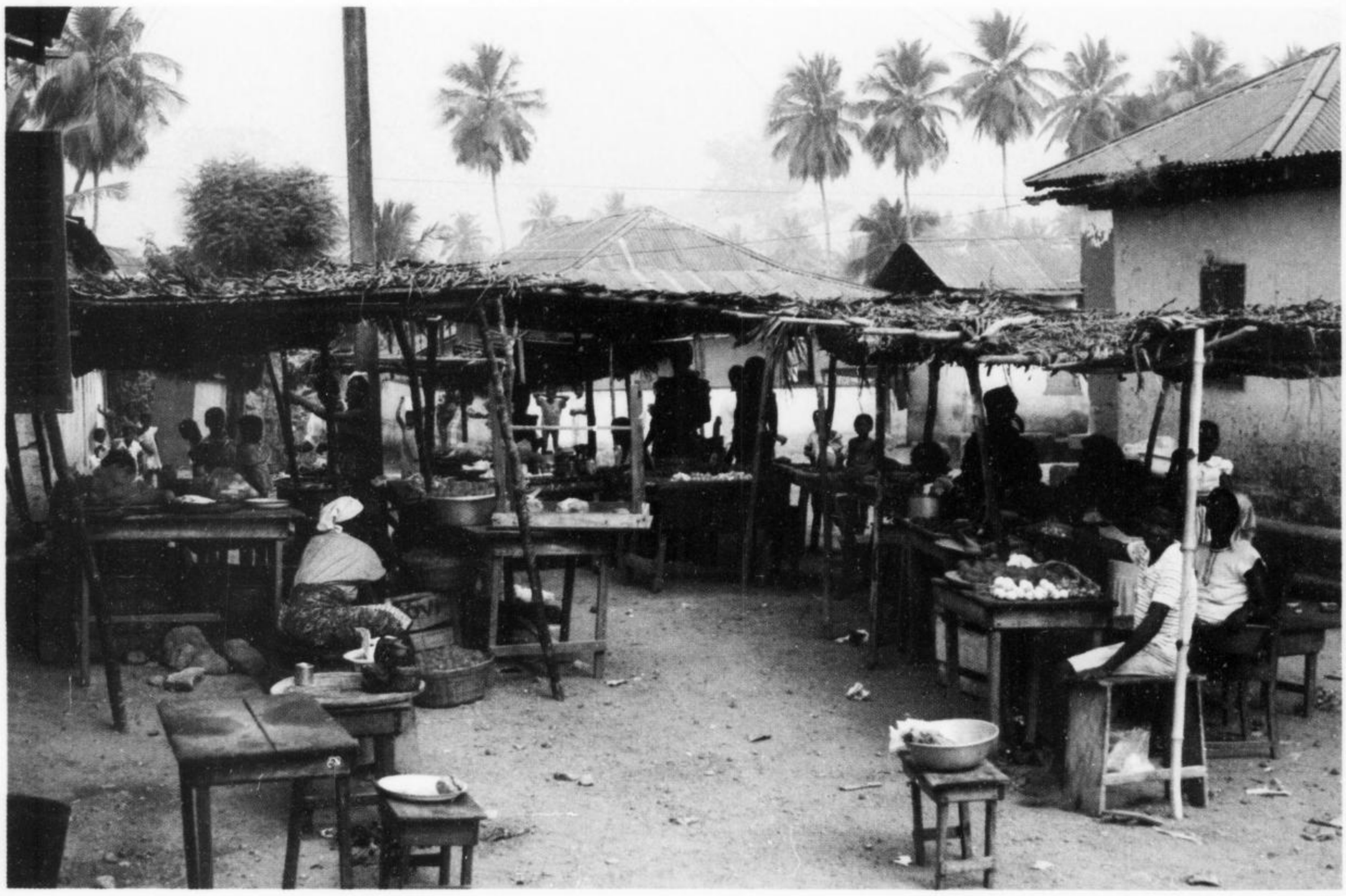
The songs might be badly recorded, and they might blast out from some tinny car stereo, but the melody is invariably subtle and elegant. The vocals are in English, French or any number of tribal languages. The sound is unmistakably African and it transforms an uncomfortable minibus ride into a vivid and memorable experience. West African music is fundamentally positive and good-natured—not angry like American rap or depressive like Jamaican reggae—and says an awful lot for the resilient optimism of the Ghanaians.

There are Muslims, Buddhists and animists in Ghana but the dominant faith of all is evangelical Christianity. Every other building seems to be the headquarters of some colourfully-named denomination: The Church of Christ of Zion; The Holy Gospel Movement of West Africa; The Order of the Holy Trinity. The fronts and backs of all the trucks and minibuses are emblazoned with holy slogans: "DON'T GIVE UP, YOUR MIRACLE AWAITS" . . . "I CAN'T HELP YOU BUT MIGHTY JESUS CAN" . . . and the best of all, "IF YOUR GOD IS DEAD . . . TRY MINE". Even business names have been evangelized: King of Kings Transport Ltd., Jesus Saves Chemical Store and the Christmas in Egypt Chop Bar. It is not at all uncommon, at any hour of the day or night, to hear the singing and clapping of an outdoor congregation, backed up by an electric organ, guitar, bass, drums and a few tambourines. Christmas was approaching day by day and the religious fervour was reaching boiling point.

Nana Elvis arrives

On 24 December I heard that Elvis and his family would be arriving that evening. I went out to the airport to meet them. I walked into the VIP lounge and there was Nana Elvis, as friendly, smiling and understated as ever. Accompanying him was Elizabeth and their children Theresa (seven), Matthew (five) and Christopher (three). There was also his daughter Eunice (sixteen) from Elvis's previous marriage. Queen Elizabeth in person was the epitome of an English middle-class wife: maternal and unruffled. Eunice was darker in complexion than the other three

Jukwaa market.



Elvis's *akyempona* or sceptre.

due to the fact that Elvis's first wife was Ghanaian. The younger ones are light coffee-coloured with curly (as opposed to Afro) hair. The little children were all lively, but it was clear from the start that Christopher was definitely the ham of the family. Elvis and Liz were very welcoming and told me to just latch myself on to the family for the next two weeks.

The next morning, after breakfast, we hauled everything into the Peugeot station wagon that Elvis had hired for the duration of their stay. We all managed to squeeze in. I got the front seat, which I shared with a suitcase, two overloaded carrier bags and a ghetto blaster. Then we took off for Jukwaa, which was an hour's drive away, about fifteen kilometres inland from the fishing port of Winneba.

Driving away from Accra, the monotonous coastal plain gradually subsided into low, bushy hills that were dotted with the occasional enormously tall baobab tree. The drive itself was quite an experience. Our car weaved crazily down the highway, avoiding the countless potholes. The cars approaching us were doing the same. Sometimes we would pass them on one side, sometimes on the other. We stopped for petrol. The station had a 1920s manual pump with two large glass cylinders that were filled with petrol before being discharged into our tank. It was late morning when we reached Jukwaa. ■

2 Next month:
A ROYAL WELCOME

N'BAAH SANTY,
of Togo, studied medicine at Kharkhov (Ukraine) during the 1980s. He is currently studying in France.

An African student discovers Ukrainian hospitality and vodka

borshch and sympathy

by N'Baah Santy

My first contact with a Ukrainian family came as a result of an invitation from my Russian teacher. She came to fetch the ten of us who were in her study group at the trolleybus station and took us to her home, a villa surrounded by apple-trees and a flower garden.

Her father greeted us on the verandah, where we took off our jackets. Then he took us into a rather spacious and beautifully furnished living room. The usual introductions were made. Her parents were retired people. Her father had been an army officer, and her mother a primary schoolteacher who had taught Ukrainian. Their son, a professional soldier in Moscow, was not present. Their daughter—our Russian teacher—had invited a pastrycook woman friend of hers along for the occasion.

We took it in turns to give our name and nationality. Our hosts were delighted to have representatives of every continent under their roof. They were interested in knowing why we had chosen to study in Ukraine and wanted to hear what we thought of the country. The father could not resist offering us some vodka as an aperitif, under the reproving gaze of his daughter, who had clearly instructed him not to serve us alcoholic drinks. He was happy when we drank to each other's health. Our teacher kept an eye on the quantities he served us.

The meal was quite different from what we had so far experienced in canteens. The borshch with fresh cream was so delicious I ate too much of it, which meant I could not enjoy as much of the following dishes as I would have liked. The mother urged us to have second helpings if we wanted to. During the meal we discovered that her husband now spent a lot of his time doing carpentry. She proudly showed us the furniture he had made with his own hands. Her hobby was gardening, but she also sang in a choir and played the piano.

A woman of about sixty, she radiated the contentment of a life well spent. She was very unaffected in the way she spoke to us, explaining how well she could understand the worries of our parents, as she was also worried about her absent son. Her husband was less forthcoming, and content merely to approve or correct his wife's and daughter's remarks.

After the meal, the two young women taught us a sailor's dance and a few waltz steps. The mother said she was sorry she had not been able to admire our traditional dances. We said goodbye to our hosts after tea.

They gave us some cakes and apples to take away with us. ■

"We can change homes. But we cannot, indeed we must not, forget the homes of the past, for they too have shaped us."

Lost illusions

by Neil Bissoondath

Above, a family of Hindus in Trinidad.

As the twentieth century began, the people who, fifty-five years later, would become my ancestors, found themselves living not in India, the place of their birth, but in a new land, the Caribbean island of Trinidad, which they were learning to call home. Driven by poverty, they had chosen to seek a new life in another part of the British empire thousands of miles away.

As the twenty-first century approaches, I too find myself living not in the land of my birth, Trinidad, but in another new land, Canada, which I have grown to call home. I was driven not by poverty—my family had found success, both professional and financial, over the decades—but by dissatisfactions far less tangible and yet, in some ways, as virulent.

Trinidad is a small island off the coast of

Venezuela. Geography has given it a hot climate, rich soil, and oil. History made it a British colony, then an independent nation under the British crown, and finally a republic answerable to none. History also gave it a diverse citizenry. A 1990 population of 1.2 million was composed of 43 per cent African and 40 per cent East Indian, with the rest from a variety of racial and cultural groups. And yet it was this very history, stirred by racial passions, that made it a complex and at times unsettling place.

On 31 August 1962, when Trinidad and Tobago became an independent nation, I was seven years old. My memories of that grand time are few. I remember lying on a mattress at night in my grandmother's house in the capital, Port of Spain, and listening to a cacophony of ships' horns mingling with the crash of artillery from the newly-formed Defence Force. I remember receiving at school a chocolate bar and a little gilded medal. I remember the flag: a red field, with a wide black band bordered in narrow white stripes running diagonally from upper left to lower right. And I remember too that other flag, the old one, the Union Jack which my grandfather used to fly outside his store, furled and forgotten in a dusty corner, history now.

I remember faces, too, frozen in adolescence: black, white, Chinese, Indian, mulatto. There is my namesake, Neil, always smiling; and Wayne, a soccer player whose promise could have led to a career in a bigger place; Brian, whose angers would lead him to radical Marxism and Black Power; Dave, whose talents would take him to Oxford. There is Andrew, from England; Vivek, from India; Reza, from Oman. There is Richard, who would die of a drug overdose; and Frank, who would die in a car accident. And so many more. . . .

We were friends and, in the rhetoric of the time, future leaders of the new nation. Race, religion, politics should not have mattered. But, inevitably, they did.

"Together we aspire, together we achieve"

On the verge of adolescence, Zaid and I were, for a time, deskmates in primary school. We were friends. We played together in the dusty schoolyard and, even though we were not of the faith, sang the Presbyterian hymns together at the morning worship. Zaid was Muslim and I was Hindu, but this meant only that our families celebrated different religious festivals: Mohammed and Krishna exercised no influence on our friendship. Yet when his father suddenly died a silence descended between us. Zaid had no words to express his loss, and the language of condolence was foreign to me. I knew that Hindus cremated their dead, and I wondered what Muslims did. But my curiosity seemed an intrusion. I could not bring myself to ask, and our friendship ended in a wordless ballet of pained glances.

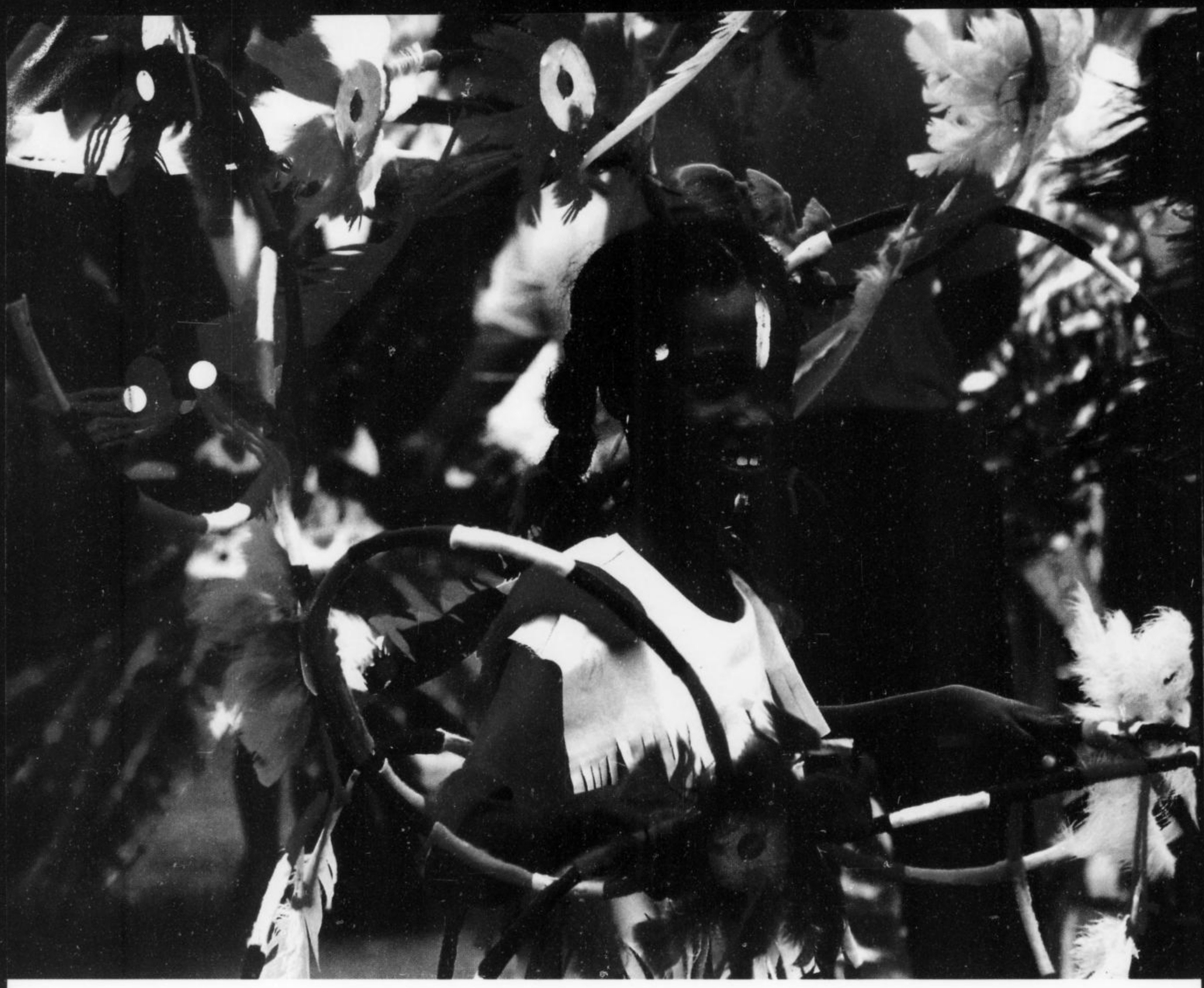
In the years to come the new flag would be reproduced dozens of times in my sketchbooks. It would be drawn in pencil or in ink, crayon-coloured or water-coloured, free and fluttering or ruled stiffly to scale. Beneath it, within a stylized ribbon, I would inscribe the island's new motto, "Together We Aspire, Together We Achieve". I liked the phrase; it had a wonderful resonance, and neatly captured the vision of hope and optimism vital to the new era. At school, the new anthem would be drilled into us, and after more than thirty years, twenty of them in a new country, the words remain as familiar to me as the alphabet:

Forged from the love of liberty
In the fires of hope and prayer . . .

"Hindus should keep their noses out of Muslim affairs"

On the verge of adulthood, Shafique and I were, for a time, friends in high school. We talked together during the hot lunch periods and, because we were not of the faith, stood in respectful silence while our classmates said the "Hail Mary". Shafique was Muslim and I was Hindu but, as with Zaid some years before, our religions exercised no influence on our friendship. Until, that is, late in 1971, when war erupted between Pakistan and India over the breakaway state of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. The war and its merits were, like Viet Nam, like Northern Ireland, a topic of vigorous discussion at school. For me, though, debate came to an abrupt end one morning

Trinidad and Tobago became an independent nation and a member of the Commonwealth in 1962. Below, at a ceremony during the independence celebrations, the Princess Royal, representing Queen Elizabeth II, head of the Commonwealth, reads the speech from the throne during the State Opening of Parliament.



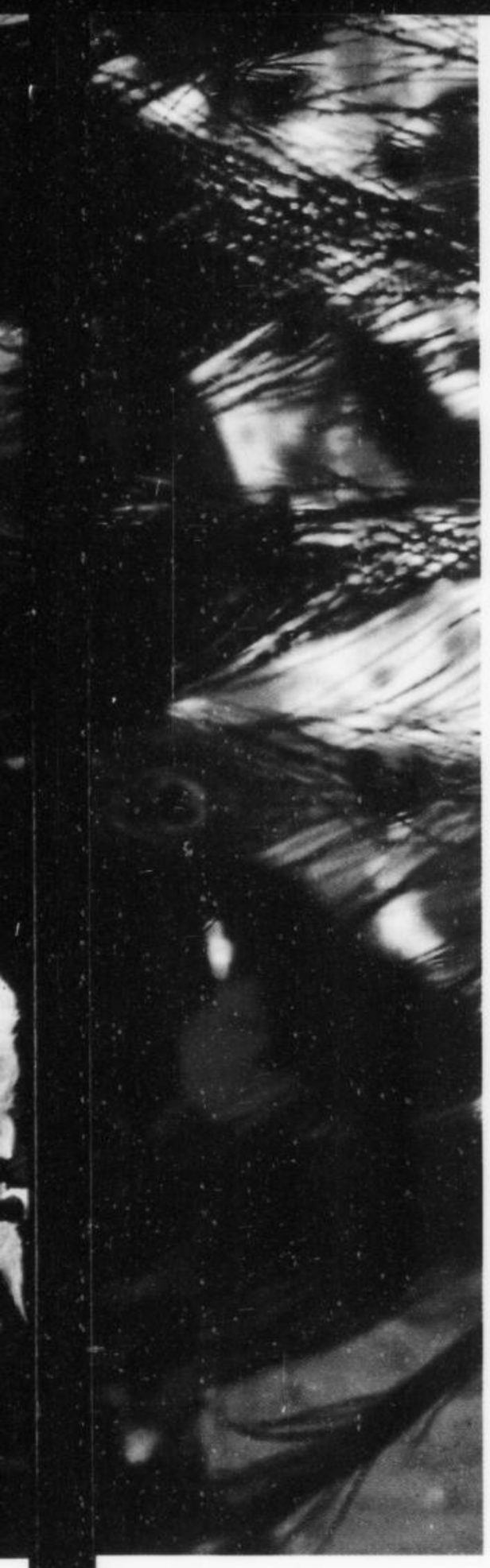
when, as I expressed support for Indian intervention in the face of reported massacres by the Pakistani army in the east, Shafique—who had been eavesdropping on the discussion—whipped around and with great indignation declared that Hindus should keep their noses out of Muslim affairs. This advent into the personal stunned me into wordlessness, and once more a friendship ended in a strained silence, but this time with a vision of schism never anticipated.

Other schisms began to make themselves apparent. It became clear as I grew older and developed an interest in politics that those who, in 1962, had offered promises of aspiring and achieving together had conceived of a narrowed togetherness. They engaged readily in the politics of race, the island dividing itself into two camps, the People's National Movement, which was largely the party for blacks, and the Democratic Labour Party, which was largely the party for Indians. We acquired a knowledge of racial unease. In a place where truth was formless, where one learnt to dismiss nothing and to distrust everything, even so simple an undertaking as a population census can lead to anxiety. Some years ago, Indians whispered to each other that their numbers had surpassed 50 per cent but that the black-controlled government had, through fear of numerical inferiority, suppressed the truth. There was something tragic about that rumour. It was, I felt, a sign of despair. We were, contrary to the popular claims, no happy island in the sun. We could not even play together without mutterings of dissatisfaction. No selection of the Trinidadian or West Indian cricket team could be made without a deserving Indian being left off the team because—so the whispers went—of his race.

"She's nice, for a black"

But it was at the island's Carnival that notions of play, of fun in the sun, became most explicit. Many aspirations are invested in the Carnival, many achievements pursued. It is spectacle on the grand scale, a two-day street party that effectively shuts the island down. It is as brilliant as Rio's, but less controlled. Anyone, local or tourist, can join in—and many do. So it was

NEIL BISSOONDATH,
Trinidad-born Canadian writer, has published several novels, including *A Casual Brutality* (Bloomsbury, U.K., 1988) and *The Innocence of Age* (Knops, Canada, 1992).



A little girl dressed up for Carnival in Port of Spain, Trinidad.

"I remember receiving at school a chocolate bar and a little gilded medal. I remember the flag: a red field with a wide black band bordered in narrow white stripes running diagonally from upper left to lower right. I remember faces, too, frozen in adolescence: black, white, Chinese, Indian, mulatto. We were friends and, in the rhetoric of the time, future leaders of the new nation. Race, religion, politics should not have mattered. But, inevitably, they did."

with a certain dismay that my ironic eye began to discern divisions not immediately apparent: that while every race participated, each did so in little pockets of homogeneity, blacks with blacks, Indians with Indians, whites with whites, etc. Only the tourists, ignorant of indigenous tensions, felt free to mingle.

But as painful as social hypocrisy may be, hypocrisy in private cuts more deeply; it slices into the soul. There is no defence against it, no shrug of *C'est la vie*, for there is in youth no recognition of the personal hypocrisies acquired through life and circumstance. How was I, as a young boy with friends black, white and Indian, to respond to one relative's disdain for people of mixed (Indian/black) race? What to say when a woman, speaking of a friend, says, "She's nice, for a black"? How to intervene when social conversation includes fluid references to "nigs"? How not to explode—patience finally melting—when a New York business agent, hitherto well-liked, makes a small mistake and becomes a "dirty Jew"? When stern arguments were made that blacks were incapable of running governments, I would point to the undeniable chaos of India: I have yet to meet an Indian willing to draw racial conclusions from that nightmare.

No one ever said black school friends were not welcome in our homes. They were, for the most part. But it was also implicit that certain limits were to be observed. A recent conversation with a relative is revealing. Denying that her parents were racist in any way, she pointed out that they welcomed all her friends to their home. Her black friends too? Yes, her black friends too. They just made it clear *she wasn't to marry any of them.*

At the age of eighteen, I left Trinidad for good. I went to a city, Toronto, in a country, Canada, which quickly became my home. The United Nations has recognized Toronto, with its hundred-odd ethnic groups speaking some eighty languages, as the most ethnically diverse city in the world. It is a place where, as another newcomer to the city once observed, one simply becomes part of the difference.

Growing up in Trinidad was for me, on both the social and personal levels, an exercise in dissatisfaction. But it is not so for everyone.

My mother, born and educated in Port of Spain, a woman widely read and travelled, always swore that she would never leave Trinidad, no matter how difficult life became. Although she enjoyed London, New York, Paris, Caracas and Rio de Janeiro, and despite her particular fondness for Venice, Trinidad was her home in ways I could not appreciate, a place to which she was linked in ways that were to me frustrating because they were inscrutable. She felt herself linked to the place as I felt myself alienated from it. The intimacy of her feeling was not one I could engage.

I have for a long time been unable to refer to Trinidad as "home". When I am travelling, when I feel myself in need of comfort, security, familiarity, it is not Trinidad that I long for. "Home" to me now is the ungraspable vastness of Canada, its diversity of geography, climate and people, its yet unformed face both a warning and a possibility. We can grow attached to other places, then. We can change homes. But we cannot, indeed we *must* not, forget the homes of the past, for they too have shaped us. The fact remains that the Trinidad motto, "Together We Aspire, Together We Achieve", humanitarian in vision, universal in philosophy, betrayed by so many people in so many ways, still speaks to me in the land in which I pursue aspiration and achievement.

"LIVING LIKE SAVAGES"

The mission of the colonizers was not confined to the occupation of land. They also had a wider social purpose: spreading Christianity, educating "savages", and civilizing what Montaigne called this "child's world", a malleable world offered up to the invaders in "a state of nature". This approach was reinforced by first contacts, for the Indians regarded the "newcomers" as supernatural beings.

But the time of surprises and gods was soon over. The Indians understood that their relations with the invaders had an ideological context. Ideological conflict took root in colonial society as early as the seventeenth century; but the fascination was not where it should have been. Missionaries, governors, merchants and army officers were dismayed to see colonists frequent Indian women and "go native", men freed from captivity prefer to stay with their Indian captors, and frontiersmen "live like savages". Thoroughgoing cultural assimilation seems to have taken place, but not in the sense wished for by the colonizers.

This is one of the strangest features of the discovery of the New World: European culture showed itself to be more fragile than the cultures it wished to dominate. Indian society exercised an attraction that was disturbing. Of course it only affected a minority, but it was an aspect of the colonization of America that called into question many accepted ideas.

In the seventeenth century, illiterate immigrants from poor backgrounds brought with them an oral and gestural culture and a vague feeling of egalitarianism. They felt close to the Indians. Communication was established through modes of behaviour, gestures and certain values shared by the Indians and the humblest colonists, even if the latter were sometimes violently hostile to the "savages". There were varying degrees of Indianization, ranging from dressing like Indians to tattooing, from living with a squaw in some remote fort to integrating into a tribe, from frontiersmen living on the fringes of society to hated half-castes.

CAPTIVATING CUSTOMS

From the Canadian Shield to Texas, Indian communities constantly accepted whites who wanted to settle with them. Only considerable hindsight makes it possible to understand this phenomenon that so disturbed the colonial authorities, who in any case were only interested in these Indianized colonists when they needed guides, interpreters or go-betweens with a tribe. In the eighteenth century groups of French trappers, living with tribes around the Great Lakes, gave birth to a sizeable mixed-blood community.

"There is something in their social system that is singularly captivating, something superior to the charm of our customs and traditions since thousands of Europeans have willingly gone native," wrote Guillaume Saint-Jean de Crèvecœur in his *Lettres d'un cultivateur américain* (1782; "Letters from an American Farmer"). The charm that so surprised him lay in the power to assimilate, the great tolerance of Indian society and the adoption system that existed in most tribes. The bonds created by adoption were indissoluble. During colonial conflicts captured whites lived in Indian villages for months, even years, on end. After undergoing the ritual of adoption, they shared the Indians' daily lives and were treated with affection by their new families.

Even after one of their prisoners had been freed, his Indian relatives would come to enquire after his health, meet his family and enjoy the pleasure of being together again. A Delaware chief said to the British in 1758, "We love you more than you love us, for when we take a prisoner, we treat him like one of our children." ■

Extracted from "L'indianisation des Blancs: Nous sommes tous des sauvages. . . Regard sur une séduction oubliée", by Philippe Jacquin in *Destins Croisés, Cinq Siècles de Rencontres avec les Amérindiens*, © UNESCO/Bibliothèque Albin Michel Histoire, Paris, 1992.

Interview with Pavel Lounguine

Inuit blues

Pavel Lounguine, director of *Taxi Blues* (1990), travelled to the polar regions to witness the collective suicide of a culture. He returned with a documentary film, *A People too Many* (1994).

■ **What gave you the idea of making a film about the Inuit of eastern Siberia?**

—Pure chance. My eldest son spent a year living with them as part of his history studies. Like all young intellectuals, he finds the taste for material values that currently prevails in Russia quite repugnant. The violence, the aggressivity, the constant struggle to get ahead.... When he returned from living with the Inuit, he told me, "They are a people who refuse to live, who are committing collective suicide." I was so strongly moved by this idea of a people refusing to live that I decided to go and see for myself. And I found what he said was true. I don't think it's an exaggeration to speak of collective suicide.

The first impression one gets, the moment one arrives in Inuit territory, is of the great contrast between the beauty of the surroundings and the dire situation of the population. The magnificent mountains, the ocean, the majesty of nature. And, in the midst of this, these appalling constructions, horribly dirty. . . . Refuse is strewn everywhere. Mountains of refuse, broken-down shacks with tiny windows, a rising stench.... This filth, the accumulation of debris, is the tangible result of contact between the Inuit and modern society!

■ **What happened on your first meeting?**

—When they meet an outsider, the first thing the Inuit do is ask whether you have any cigarettes or alcohol. Have you got anything to sell or give away? They are a people who have no desire to talk. Talking, for them, is a waste of effort.

In our society conversation may sometimes bring comfort. A trouble shared is a trouble halved. But not for the Inuit.

It's only through seeing them at sea, in their kayaks, that one can begin to understand them. On board these tiny boats, which are now equipped with outboard motors, these men go through a complete transformation. It really is like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, an astonishing case of dual personality. Suddenly, their eyes light up, their faces change completely, and they live again as they were meant to live and as they lived for thousands of years. Handsome and strong, magnificent. At sea, none of them would think of drinking, even during rest periods.

■ **What is their daily life like?**

—I would almost say it is like a caricature of paradise.

There are no taboos in their lives. They have complete sexual freedom. Nobody cares whose son or daughter they are; families are more or less collective. Days are spent drinking, eating, making love, smoking, making love again, drinking.... No history, no memory. The whole lot of them—the old, the young, even the children—drink and make love. No rules or

Above, Pavel Lounguine in Chukotka, Siberia, while shooting his film about the Inuit in 1993.

"Nobody cares whose son or daughter they are; families are more or less collective. Days are spent drinking, eating, making love, smoking, making love again, drinking. . . . No history, no memory. The whole lot of them—the old, the young, even the children—drink and make love. No rules or regulations. Nothing is forbidden. But since all this is wallowing in dirt, it is a filthy, squalid paradise."

Three stills from Pavel Lounguine's documentary about the Inuit.

regulations. Nothing is forbidden. But since all this is wallowing in dirt, it is a filthy, squalid paradise.

■ **Does the family exist in this restriction-free society?**

—Of course, the family exists, but in a very particular form. As almost all the Inuit are of mixed race, the problem is not so much one of knowing who one's father is as of knowing to whom or to what one belongs. Each of them, whether they appear to us to be white, red-haired, blond, Indian, oriental or black, is an Inuit. They are all completely convinced of their Inuit identity. They all share, in a sense, a physical inability to live anywhere else.

They are extremely attached to their land, their hills. Alaska is only thirty kilometres away. They could put their families on board their kayaks and go and visit their cousins, their relatives in North America. The American and Canadian Inuit live in a modern culture, with cars, houses, and so on, on reservations where white people are not allowed.

■ **Are the Russian Inuit allowed to go there?**

—Today they are prohibited from going to join those in America. But when they had the right to go there not one of them chose to stay. They went for day trips and then came back.

■ **In your film you speak of 3,000 years of civilization. . . .**

—Under the communist regime, the children were forcibly educated in boarding schools, where they were taught to speak Russian. They lived in a Russian cultural system. But the Inuit have nothing in common with Russian farmers. Their psychological make-up is extremely subtle. Half of them paint. . . . Their language and their culture are rich and complex. They are great readers and the library is a revered place. They know an enormous amount about culture and history.

At the same time the Russian administrators are crying out for them to work. There is practically no contact between the two worlds.

■ **You say that the Inuit read a great deal. Do they listen to the radio or to music?**

—Of course they do. You can see children who sport the trappings of modern life. They wear smart shoes like kids all over the world, and listen to Michael Jackson on their personal stereos!

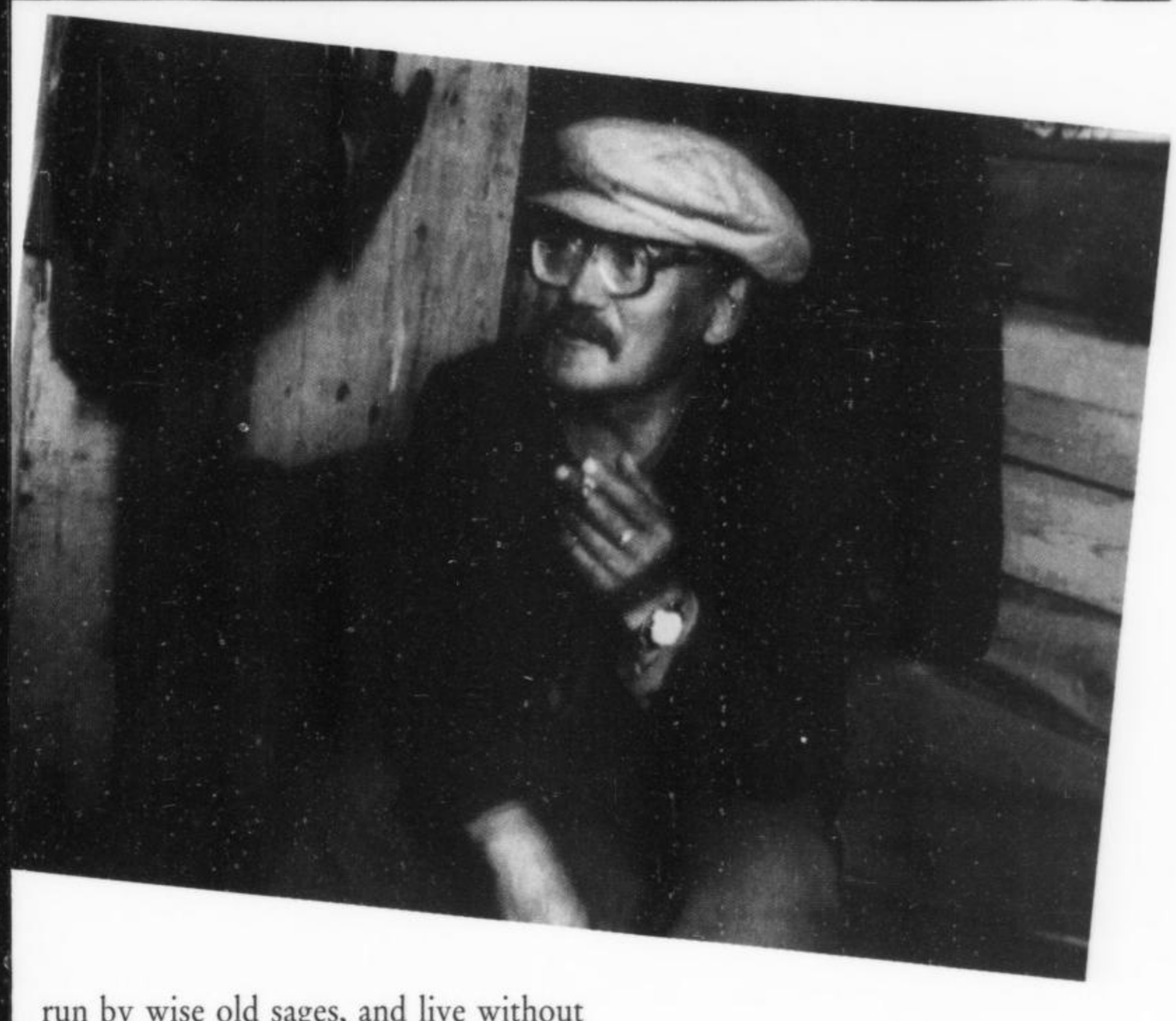
■ **This is all a far cry from their traditional culture.**

—The ancient Inuit created a thoroughly original culture. As their land is very fragile, their food supply is unreliable and the winter is extremely cold, they developed a way of life which is highly sensible and ecologically sound. There never used to be any waste. . . . They would capture a walrus and cut it up. All the villagers would share in the booty, eating the flesh, making kayaks from the skin, tools from the bones and fire from the fat. Even the intestines were used. Every conceivable part of the walrus served some purpose. The animal was consumed in its entirety. Not a scrap was thrown away!

The Inuit lived in harmony with nature, before the arrival of caterpillar tracks, which tore up the earth and brought waste, packaged food, heating oil. . . . They had a spiritual life, a mythology and a philosophy: they built one type of house for the winter and another for the summer. They proudly looked after plots of grass.

All so-called primitive peoples have an "ecological" culture. The Inuit cannot understand why the Russians take so many fish out of the sea, only to throw half of them back and leave them to rot. They seem to find this deeply disturbing. Abhorrent. It is soul-destroying for them.

Nowadays they dream of independence. They want to set up a kind of national park



run by wise old sages, and live without the whites, as before. But will they succeed? It's doubtful whether they will be able to maintain their houses, their heating systems, their electricity supply. . . . They are not sure themselves.

■ **You say that there are as few as 1,500 Inuit in the area now, whereas there were far more of them in the past. Is this due to emigration?**

—I'd prefer to describe it as a disappearance. The Inuit are dying out and they are not reproducing. They die very young—of disease, from drowning, of asphyxiation. Basically because of alcohol. They are a people born to live among nature, and now nature is being destroyed. So what reason is there to go on living? ■

PAVEL LOUNGUINE
is a Russian film-maker who wrote a dozen scenarios for television and cinema before making his first feature-length film, *Taxi Blues* (1990), which won him the award for best director at the Cannes Film Festival. Since then he has made another feature film, *Luna Park* (1992), and several documentaries.

THE GENIUS OF PEOPLES

The misdevelopment of small peoples with traditional ways of life is the price to be paid for insufficiently developed thinking by the social sciences, those major sciences of the twenty-first century that are "scientific" in name only. *Ius gentium*: the law, the genius of peoples, was defined by Giambattista Vico (1668-1744). Each people, however small, has its own unique genius, and more technically advanced nations should respect the genius of these peoples, i.e. their religion, so that they "develop" according to their own dynamic. The desire to "convert" them to a revealed religion or to Marxist atheism is a form of interference that, five centuries on, we know to be lethal. The state should remain strictly neutral.

The Inuit and Indian peoples will be in a position to seek positive solutions to their existential problems if they act vigilantly within the framework of truly autonomous territories. Ignorance has never been synonymous with innocence. With their brothers in the Third World, they must rearm themselves inwardly and give new force to their mythologies. All peoples need to be respected on equal terms.

It is particularly urgent that decision-makers should be converted to cultural and religious pluralism because we are discovering, on the eve of the year 2000, that we need them. They are part of the second wind of humanity which is coming to realize that our technological and materialistic civilization, by deserting the thought of others, has cut itself off from the universal. ■

Introduction, by Jean Malaurie, to "Les Inuit" ("The Inuit") in *Destins croisés, Cinq siècles de rencontres avec les Amérindiens* © Unesco/Bibliothèque Albin Michel Histoire, Paris, 1992.

Ryo Ogawa explains why a Japanese can feel at ease among Africans

The Fulbe and the Samurai code

by Ryo Ogawa

When I was doing research among the Fulbe of Dyolof, in Senegal, I had a faithful assistant called Awdi, an evocative name meaning "seed kept for the next sowing". He was ten years my junior. The day of my departure, instead of seeing me off from the village like the other Fulbe, he hid himself away and did not bid me farewell. It was his way of not showing how sad he was.

As a Japanese taught at a very early age not to show any emotions, I was always touched by the way my Fulbe friends concealed their joys and sorrows. It was the result of a code of behaviour they call *pulaagu*.

Dignity, courage, patience and discernment all form part of *pulaagu*. For me, its essential feature is the notion of self-control. In Japan, too, it is thought shameful to make an exhibition of oneself or give in to physical needs, in accordance with the *bushido* tradition venerated by the samurai of old.

It is true of hunger, for example.

I very rarely heard a Pullo* say, "I'm hungry." To say so would be to betray *pulaagu*, to demean oneself. I never saw children of four or five complain when a meal was slow in coming. If they went to market with their mothers, they would not eat anything until they got back home. At the beginning of my stay, I myself was sharply criticized for wanting to watch a sheep that had been killed in my honour being cut up. My curiosity went beyond the bounds of *pulaagu*.

Yet *pulaagu*, devised by an African people of herdsmen, and *bushido*, devised by Japanese rice-growers, have the same function, which is to train fighters who are capable of resisting adversity and want to surpass themselves while retaining their self-control.

We differ in so many ways that I am delighted by such affinities. The brisk, almost violent dances of Africans contrast with our

RYO OGAWA
is a Japanese ethnologist who worked until 1993 at the Osaka Museum of Ethnology and now teaches at Kyoto Seika University. Since 1975 he has carried out research on the Fulbe of Senegal, about whom he has written several studies including (in Japanese) *Life in the Sahel Ethnographical Study of a Fulbe Society in Senegal* (Japan Broadcasting Office Publishers, 1987) and (in English) *"Bodilessness" and Incongruity: Body Image and its Social Dynamics among the Fulbe of Senegal* (1990).

Right, Ryo Ogawa with his Fulbe friends.
Above, a young Pullo girl photographed by the author.
Below, Fulbe women returning from the well.

slow, undulating movements. Their eloquence contrasts with our terseness—there are few great Japanese orators.

How can I explain why I always feel at ease with Africans? Perhaps it has something to do with our shared attitude to nature. The Japanese, like the Africans, are careful to maintain harmonious links with nature, which is seen as the manifestation of a many-faced deity. African animism and Japanese Shintoism are closely related.

Black Africans' dignity in their daily lives and their mystical links with nature are such that whenever I return to Africa I come into contact again with the real Japan. ■

* Singular of Fulbe.

The hornbill's quest

A Dayak writer from Indonesia visits the Koreans of northern China

I am a Dayak, one of the indigenous people of Kalimantan (Borneo) in the Indonesian archipelago. I was born in the heart of the island, which we call Tanah Dayak (Dayak Island), and ever since I was a little boy I have always been conscious that I am an Indonesian of Dayak origin.

When I left Tanah Dayak at the age of thirteen to go to Java to continue my studies, my family said, "Do not come back unless you can make a substantial contribution to our suffering people. We have fought the Dutch and the Japanese, and we won independence. The task facing your generation is to develop our people and our region because we cannot believe that anyone else will do so."

As "a young warrior" I knew that this was a challenge that I could not refuse. I did not reply, however, and went silently down to the ship that took me a thousand miles away from my dear forest and river, my childhood playground. Since then I have travelled to many places with a big question in my small head: "What can I do to help my suffering minority people?" I have always asked this question throughout my eventful life, and it was very much in my mind during a visit I made to the People's Republic of China about fifteen years ago.

After listening to my questions, my Chinese hosts in Beijing seemed to have understood what I was interested in and arranged for me to visit many minority regions. I was able to go almost everywhere except Tibet and Xinjiang.

It was winter when Lao Wang, my Chinese host in Beijing, organized my visit to the Korean minority that lives in Heilongjiang in northeast China.

My Korean hosts were waiting to welcome me as I stepped down from the train. Lao Wang spoke to them in Mandarin and introduced me to them.

The author (circled) during his visit to China.

"So you speak Mandarin too"

"Mr. Kim is in charge of the ethnic Koreans here," said Lao Wang. We shook hands warmly.

"I hope you are not too cold," said Mr. Kim.

"I think I have enough clothes, thanks to the serious responsibility and full attention of Lao Wang," I answered. "So you speak Mandarin too."

"Every Korean here speaks Mandarin because we learn it at school," said Mr. Kim on our way to the guest house. "In China there are a lot of Korean translators. In our schools Korean is used as the teaching language, but of course we also have to learn Mandarin, our national language, so that we can communicate with other ethnic groups in our big country."

"I should like to know how you Koreans here think of yourselves," I asked Mr. Kim. "Do you regard yourselves primarily as Korean or Chinese?"

by Kusni Sulang

"Our nationality is Chinese and our ethnic group is Korean," said Mr. Kim. "I do not see a contradiction between my nationality and my ethnic origin."

"Contradictions—conflicts even—between ethnic groups will come to the surface if you do not have a correct ethnic policy," added Lao Wang. "It will turn out badly if you neglect their existence and their rights."

"Do you think you are the real masters of your home region here?" I asked. "Don't you have an idea of forming an independent state or joining North or South Korea? I don't want to cause offence. . . ."

"Don't worry. Ask any questions you wish," said Lao Wang.

"I am sure that our Korean friends will show you everything you need to see."

"Let's go and visit some Korean families," said Mr. Kim.

"I think it will be better to walk so that we can enjoy the winter weather and appreciate the beauty of the snow," Lao Wang added smiling.

"It is too far," Mr. Kim said.

Special treatment

When we approached a family house, all the members of the family were waiting in front of the door and applauded us. After I had been introduced to everyone, they showed me their house, which consisted of a kitchen, a guest room and sleeping rooms. It was small but tidy. In their kitchen was a water pump.

"Every Korean family's house has a water pump like this," Mr. Kim explained.

"Do Han families have them too?" asked Lao Wang. (The Han are the majority ethnic group in China, like the Kinh in Viet Nam and the Javanese in Indonesia.)

"No," said Mr. Kim. "I am worried that the Han will become jealous because of the special treatment the Chinese government accords to the ethnic Koreans."

"Jealous of the water pump?" I asked.

"No, not only the water pump. That is only one form of our government's special attention towards minorities. Here we have our own schools with Korean as the teaching language. We have our own factories manufacturing clothes and footwear. As the majority population here we also control economic and political power. Of course there are representatives of our Han brothers and sisters among us."

"What can I do to help my suffering minority people? I try to answer this question by going to see what is happening in other countries. Wherever I go, I keep my eyes and ears wide open. I am like the hornbill, the beautiful bird that is the emblem of my people. I fly from tree to tree in the thick forest of ideas."

"Are there any grounds for your fears? Have you ever had any serious differences of opinion or conflicts with the Han?" I asked Mr. Kim.

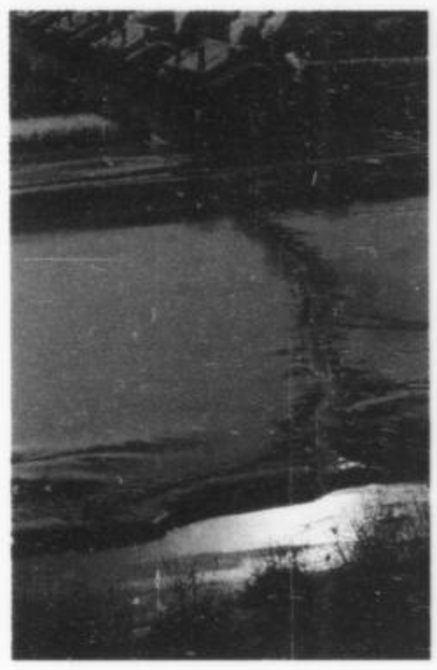
"I do not think we can avoid differences of opinion as they are part of life," said Mr. Kim. "Contradictions even exist among the Koreans here, and it is one of our tasks to solve them so that they do not develop into serious conflict."

"What about your own experiences, Lao Chung?" Lao Wang asked our host.

Lao Chung, the head of the family, answered without hesitation. "Until now the Koreans and the Han have lived together peacefully here and we always help each other in our daily activities. The Han children study in the same schools as our children. They learn Korean and we learn Mandarin as our national language. We need our Han brothers and sisters to develop our region."

"The Koreans are in the majority here," said Mr. Kim, "and this creates a special situation. As Chinese, the Koreans and the Han enjoy the same rights in all fields. If we manufacture our own clothes and shoes and keep our culture alive, it is because our government respects the cultures and traditions of minorities and regards them as the riches of our nation. The Han, who are the minority among us here, enjoy exactly the same rights as the ethnic Koreans. Just as the central government gives us special treatment, so we give the Han minority here special attention. Be patient, please, my friend, we will visit our schools, factories, local government offices, agriculture and art and literature centres so that you can make an overall evaluation of our development."

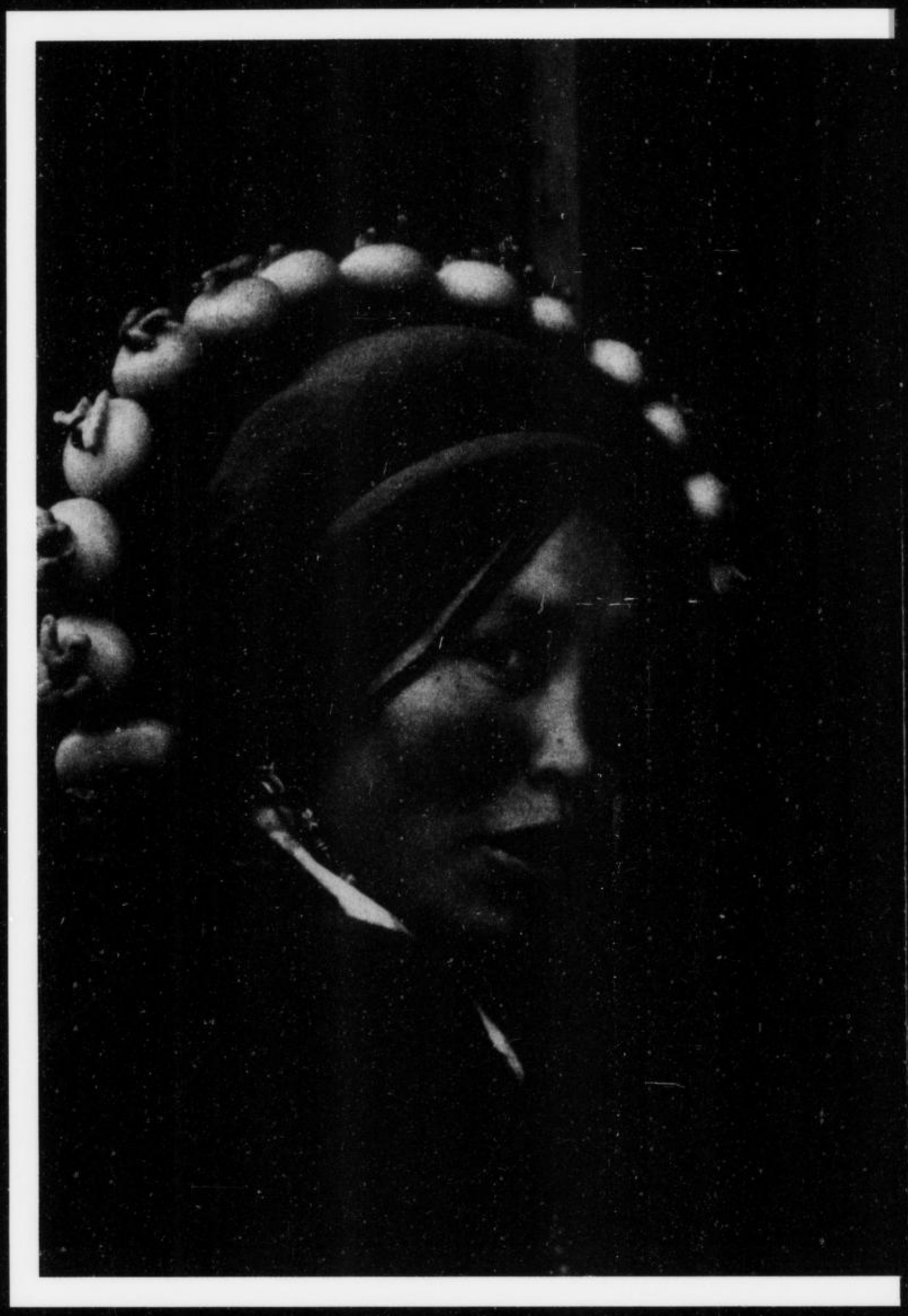
"It sounds like a propaganda speech," I couldn't help thinking. ■



The village of Miao in Heilongjiang, a vast province in northeast China with a large immigrant population.

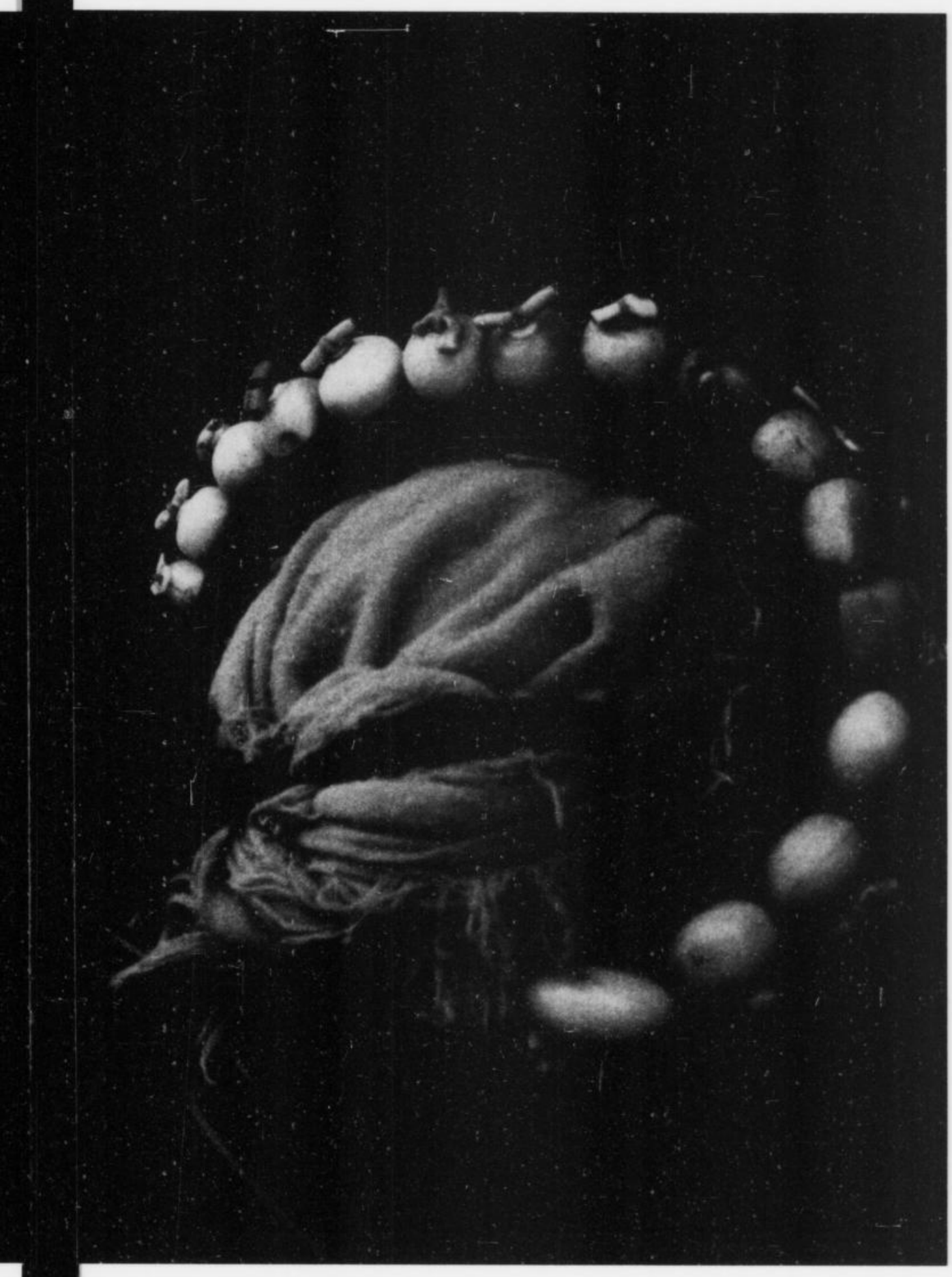
KUSNI SULANG
is an Indonesian political scientist and writer who has published several plays and collections of poetry, the best known of which is *Song of a Dragon Son* (1992). His articles on political, cultural and social questions have appeared in several Indonesian newspapers and magazines.

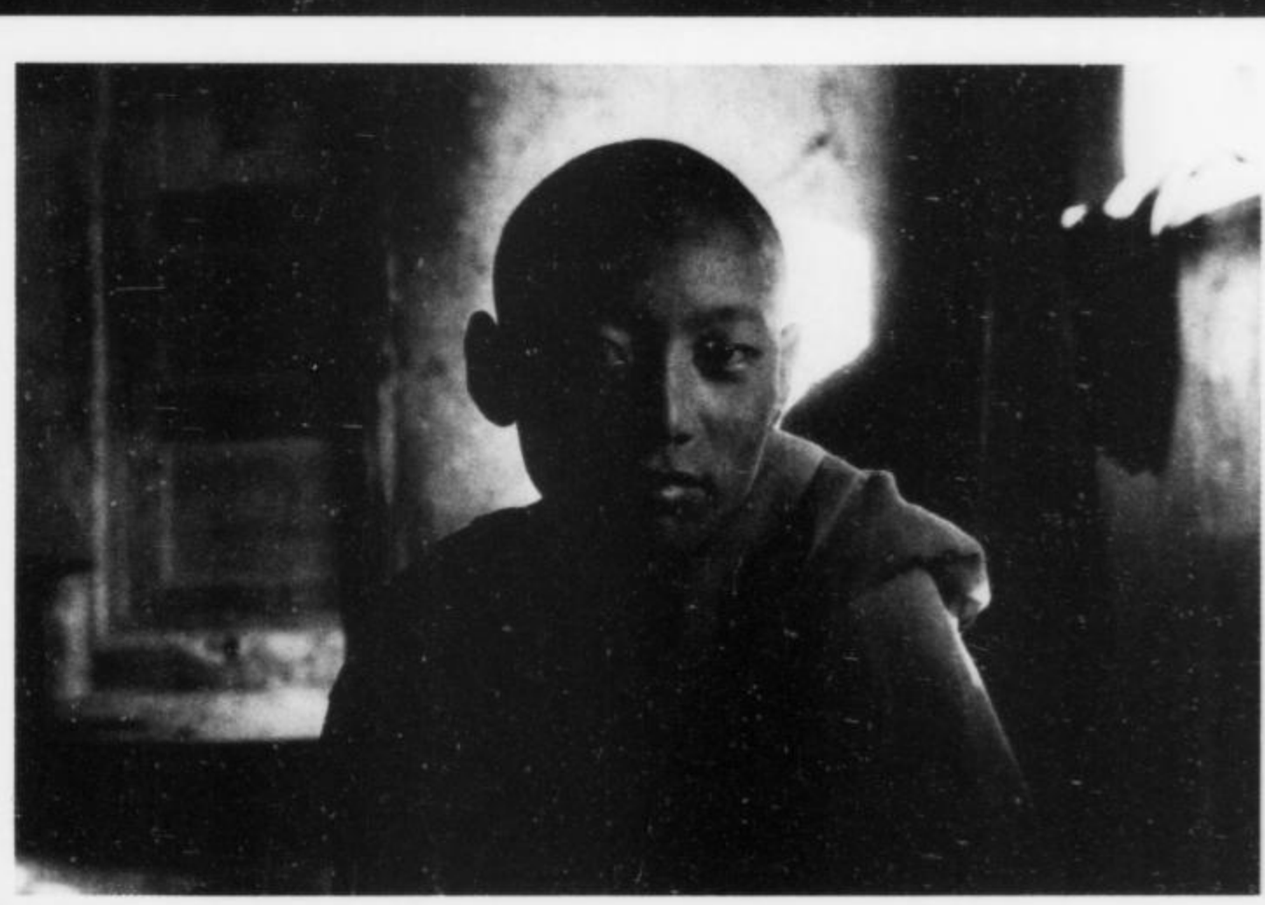
ENCOUNTER WITH A PHOTOGRAPHER:
PAULIUS NORMANTAS



Tibet preserved in amber

Paulius Normantas is a Lithuanian photographer who lives in Hungary. He is particularly interested in peoples whose traditional ways of life he believes to be threatened. A beautiful collection of his photos has appeared in a book whose title, *Vanishing Sources* (1990), encapsulates the spirit of his work. His quest for sources has taken him to some sixty peoples



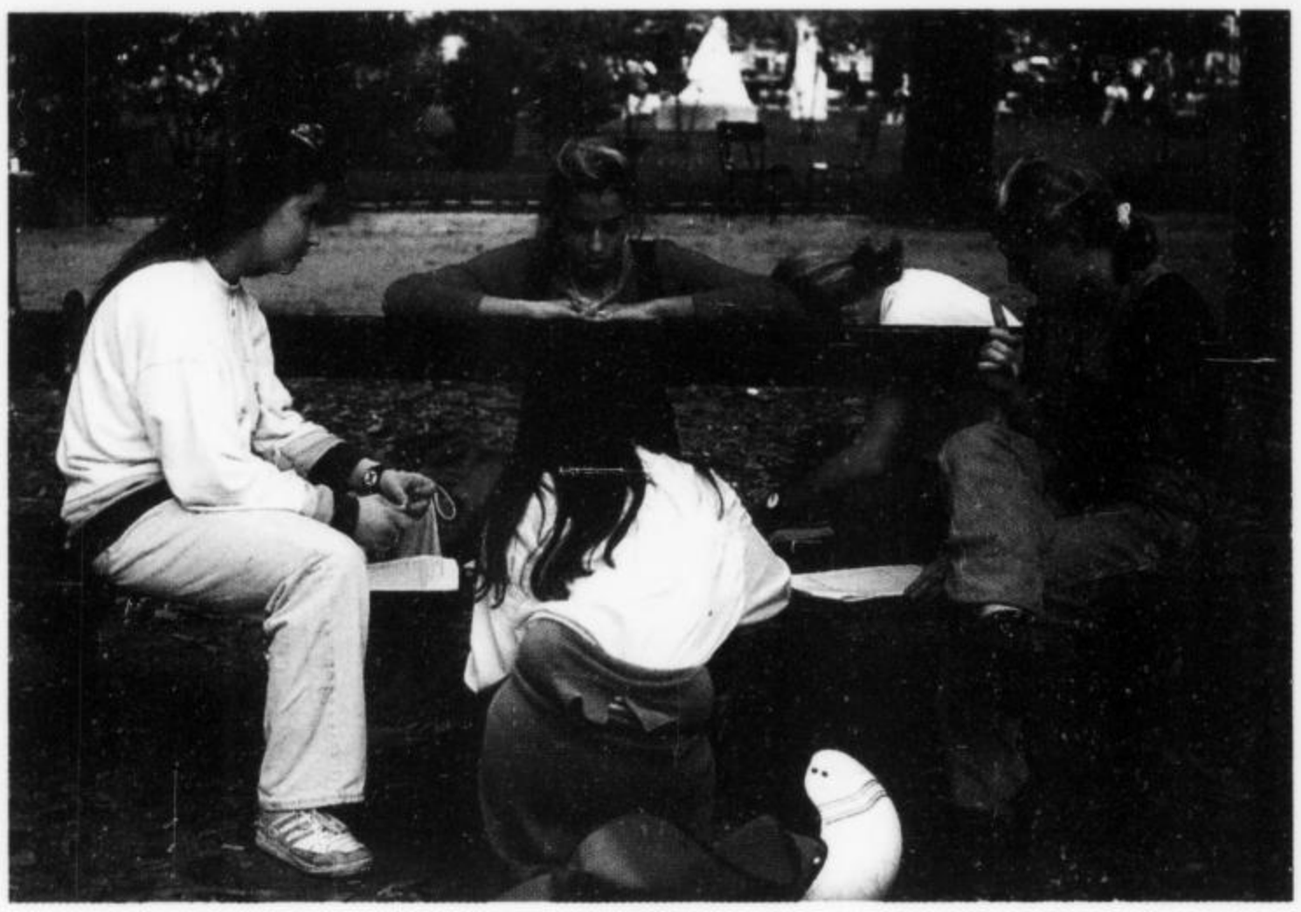


whose lives he has shared and whose dying traditions he has recorded with sober, powerful images.

In eastern Tibet, where he followed in the footsteps of the great Hungarian Tibetologist Alexander Csoma of Körös (1784-1842), Normantas tells how he came to win the trust of the villagers of Shoni bo: "In the market I saw two exceptionally beautiful girls who were wearing diadems of Indian amber, each weighing at least two kilos. I tried to photograph them with my telephoto lens, but they ran off immediately. So I put my camera away and eventually managed to get near to them. I wear an amber charm around my neck, but it is Baltic amber, fossilized resin, whereas Indian amber is

mineral. After touching the amber of my good-luck charm—one of them even chewed it a little—the girls invited me to their village where I spent the happiest part of my entire trip and took my best photos."

The black and white photos on these four pages were taken by Paulius Normantas during his stay in Tibet. ■



Dreams of twenty

Twenty women aged between eighteen and twenty-five. After not very successful school careers they are attending the Active Preparation Programme for Qualification and Employment (PAQUE) at the Parismédica centre. Set up by the French government in 1992, PAQUE aims to assist young adults in the eighteen to twenty-five age group from all cultural backgrounds. The Parismédica Centre, which was opened in 1987 and is located near the Gare de l'Est in Paris, trains them to become paramedics. But the teaching staff is also prepared to listen to their problems. . . .

One morning I told the young women on my course: "Today it's your turn to do the talking. Fire away."

There was a moment's hesitation, then the well-behaved Fatma, with her large white collar, overcame her shyness and said:

"Everyone here makes their clans!"

As I had decided not to intervene, I let gramatical errors go by. Fatma's French is as shaky as her colleagues'.

Martine, a Frenchwoman "born and bred", chipped in: "It's simply that one likes to be with people one prefers." Her categorical tone, round glasses and slight plumpness accentuated her air of being the little lady who knows everything.

Nelly from Martinique was surprised at the odd way they had all decided where to sit. She walked elegantly round the classroom, her high heels tapping on the floor, and said:

"Could it be that we're sitting like countries drawn on a map? Yes, that's it, we've formed a map! The two Comorans are sitting at the same table. On their right are the three inseparable Sri Lankans, on their left the West Indians. And who do we find in the middle?"

Her varnished nails flashed as she raised a slender hand and pointed:

"The metropolitan French!"

Sabrina from Morocco rose to her feet:

"What about the Africans? If we're sitting like a map, they should be occupying the whole of the middle of the room."

But beautiful, smooth-haired Sirga from Côte d'Ivoire, an imposing figure in her ample boubou, said calmly, and with an authority probably inherited from her father, who is a judge in her native village:

"We African women never form groups. Here we're mixing with the rest."

It is African women, though, who are the most reluctant to give up their traditional costumes, even when we advise them to try to reassure their future employers by dressing in a more conventional fashion. Their brightly coloured boubous contrast sharply with the skirts and blouses of the other women, whose style of dress, we explain, is more likely to secure them the kind of jobs they are being trained for by "Parismédica"—as nursing auxiliaries, assistant paediatric nurses or geriatrics auxiliaries.

The people in my class come from a host of countries—Algeria, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, France, French West Indies, the Gambia, Guinea, Haiti, Italy, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam and Zaire, among others—and *they persist in forming clans!*

A certain intercultural resentment, which can sometimes flare up into open conflict, is the inevitable result of so many women being cooped up in a little rectangular room and wanting to stick up for their own traditions rather than their neighbour's.

"Let's talk about the ideal husband."

There was a buzz of excitement in the room. All the women were interested in my request. Several were already married, others were

Young women today. From left to right: in France, Morocco and Viet Nam.

young women

by Hélène Trouche Simon

engaged, though they had no say in the choice of their future husbands. In many cases, their fathers still had the right of veto.

"In Algeria we're regarded as French," said the already married Fatma. "But my mother, who is French, converted to Islam to marry my father."

"But couldn't you have 'gone' with a Frenchman?" asked Linda the Senegalese.

"No, I wasn't interested," Fatma replied with a nervous laugh.

"What if he'd converted?"

"Oh in that case, yes."

"But he'd still have remained French."

"I'd have encouraged him to convert."

Fatma is an unquestioning believer in Islam: whatever the "infidel's" colour or nationality, he will be accepted as a brother by the Muslim community as long as he recognizes the Qur'an.

"But a converted Frenchman is still a Frenchman," repeated Linda, who regards ethnic ties as more important than religious denominations.

African men who live with Frenchwomen

Martine got to her feet and took off her glasses. A great believer in freedom of conscience, she banged her fist on the table:

"It's outrageous to force someone to convert!"

Fatma stood up to her bravely:

"I can't see anything wrong in it—it's my mother who urges us to remain faithful to Islam. Yes, my mother!"

She emphasized her affection for her mother, which, she said, was why she had taken the decisions she had. They were linked by a strong and profound bond which had a whole tradition behind it. Contrary to the suggestion of the indignant "free thinker"—and however goody-goody she might seem to other people—she was not under the thumb of an intransigent father.

"Wouldn't you like to be able to choose for yourself?" Linda insisted, proud that she had recently managed to shake off the yoke of tradition by marrying a man who, it would seem, came from another milieu.

"My parents are demanding people. I would be dishonouring them," Fatma replied quietly.

She was referring to *horma*, the honour without which a Muslim is excluded from society, the family honour which hinges largely on the conduct of the daughter of the house. Honour, for Fatma, was something vastly more important than any other notion cherished in the West, such as personal happiness, independence or freedom of choice.

Martine unexpectedly took Fatma's side, revealing that she was not such a great believer in freedom after all:

"My family would never speak to me again if I went off with a black!"

Calmly, and with a mysterious smile on her lips, Sirga decided to intervene:

"There are African men who go with Frenchwomen, and Frenchmen who go with African women. In Senegal we women now do the choosing. I met a young man in Corsica. His

"For Fatma, whatever a person's colour or nationality, he will be accepted as a brother by the Muslim community as long as he recognizes the Qur'an. 'But a converted Frenchman is still a Frenchman,' retorted Linda, who regards ethnic ties as more important than religion."

"That day each of them stuck to their guns, with a hint of condescension, not to say contempt, for those who did not share their vision of the 'ideal husband'. In fact very little was said about that putative husband. All that counted was the attitude of the family, that omnipresent and time-honoured institution whose shadowy presence hung over the lives of Sirga, Linda, Jasmina and even Martine, who was so proud of being a free spirit."

family doesn't like blacks, but he does. I won't say any more!"

Martine, the little Frenchwoman, put on her glasses again and tried to justify her reaction:

"It has to do with my two brothers. They like to know who I'm going out with. At their school there were lots of immigrant children who bullied them. That's where their hatred of foreigners comes from."

The piping voice of Jasmina, the young Sri Lankan who had arrived in France less than a year ago, could be heard above the hubbub:

"My fiancé is Sri Lankan, like me. And he was chosen by my parents. I have to wait three years before getting married. . . .".

Martine interrupted her:

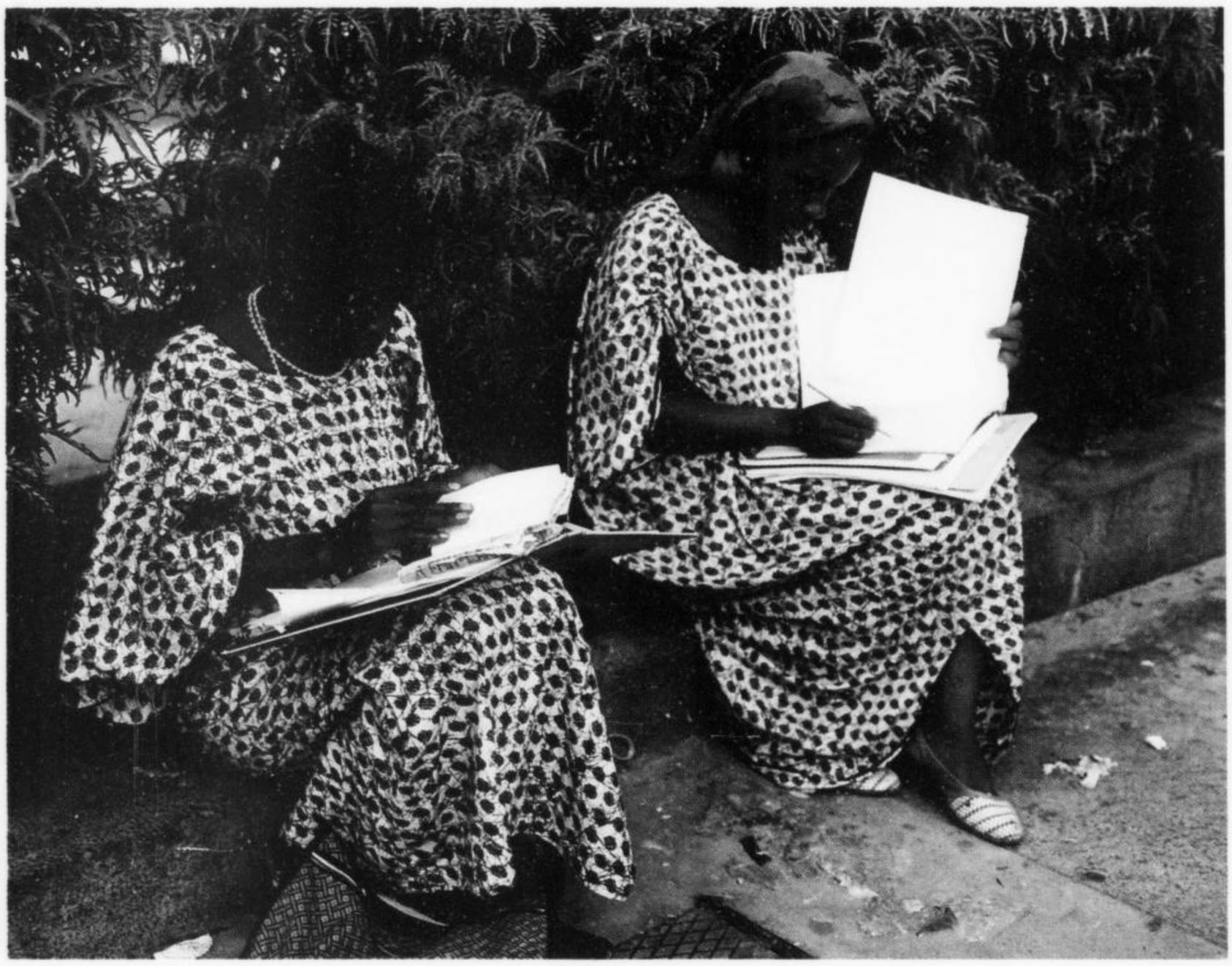
"Three years? Good luck to you!"

Encouraged by the approving giggles her quip had produced, she went on:

"In the meantime, what do you get up to with him?"

"We just talk," murmured Jasmina, who normally never says a word in class. ■

Young women today in Sri Lanka (above) and Côte d'Ivoire (below).



HÉLÈNE TROUCHE SIMON, a French psychologist who was born in Zaire, is an educational advisor and consultant for developing countries. She has published a number of studies on the Rorschach test, a projective test widely used in psychology.

The Beijing underground.

'One turning planet'

by David Harris

Australian writer David Harris set out to search for Li-jien, a mysterious city built in China by Romans 1,300 years before Marco Polo reached Cathay. . . .

Beijing. There are sixty-two people waiting at the stop for bus 375. As it comes around the corner, I see the bus is already full. I join the crowd that runs beside the double doors, and when the bus stops I struggle up against the flood of people pouring out. The doors hiss shut, the bus lurches forward and I grab a hand-rail.

"Hello." I twist around to see a young Chinese woman smiling at me. She asks, "What do you think of China?"

"It teaches you to stand like a banana." All those who smile know English. "What is your name?"

"Wang Fei. I want to go to a university in the West." She takes an envelope from the pocket of her jacket. It is a long list of rules for overseas study. Wang Fei's face becomes suddenly frightened as she asks, "What does it cost for an air fare to America, or Australia?"

How precious and fragile is hope. I feel guilty when I whisper, "More than a thousand dollars."

Wang Fei turns her face aside. "Thank you," she says. We stand quietly, staring out of the window at the four lanes of traffic, the crowded markets, and the steel skeletons of high-rise hotels.

The bus reaches Xishimen terminus. Wang Fei shakes my hand and is soon lost among the thousands of people. I walk towards the underground railway station.

The footpath is blocked by a boy, tied up with ropes and lying on the concrete. He is perhaps ten years old. Naked to the waist he lies on his side, knees tucked up. The ropes cut into his arms that are bound tightly to his body. An old man stands by the boy's head. He rattles a tin that he holds out to the onlookers. When enough coins have been dropped into the tin, the boy begins to struggle. He kicks out his legs, gasps for breath and cries out in pain. Then the ropes burst apart and he leaps to his feet, triumphant.

The crowd sighs and applauds. His street performance shows the power of Qi Gong, a belief that we have an energy to control things and even to heal the body. This is the China that launches satellites, splits the atom and has just opened its first Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant. One of the most popular programmes on Chinese television is the Qi Gong show. Like Western magicians, or faith healers,

"We have a pleasant time learning words of each other's language. Other Chinese visit us to sit on the bunk and meet a stranger from the West. Mr. Shui searches rapidly from page to page in his book, looks up words in the dictionary and suddenly says, his eyes gleaming with pride and happiness, 'We belong to one turning planet.'"

the Qi Gong experts delight millions by making a watch pass through the sides of a drinking glass, reading minds, or curing a person who has fits.

In the underground train I sit beside a Chinese woman dressed in high-fashion clothes, with a beautiful lace collar. "My name is Fan Li Su." She teases her crimped hair with her fingertips. "I work with an international finance company. The hours are hard. Often we finish after midnight. But the pay is good. My boss lets me come to work late some days. Flexible time."

Fan Li Su is confident, with the relaxed way of somebody who knows she has a good meal waiting at home.

"You see, I belong to an elite in Beijing. The common people call us nobles. We are unmarried, independent, well-educated, have travelled to America, and earn ten times the salary of a university professor. My boyfriend has a Toyota car, and I have a maid at my apartment.

"In China," says Fan Li Su, pushing her hair back with both hands, "We have much about the sun and the moon. Male and female. Light and darkness. China is changing. I will be the bright sun."

I leave the underground train and walk to the Australian Embassy. There I will meet officials who help me plan my search for the Lost City of Rome. Far out to the north-west, where the Great Wall crumbles into mounds of dust, may be the ancient ruins that have brought me across the world. Tomorrow I will catch the night train from Beijing to Lanzhou, the Golden City of the Silk Road.

A fast-food restaurant in Beijing.

Stranded in a train

The train is stranded. In hard sleeper carriage number five I sit on a bottom bunk, a blanket wrapped around my shoulders. My breath steams in the air. Through the window I see a leafless plane tree standing in the snow. Across a wide flat land, scattered trees lose themselves in low clouds. It is twenty hours since we stopped here at a nameless railway siding in central China, south of the Yellow River.

Opposite me, on the other bottom bunk, sits a policeman, Mr. Zhou, with his wife and their little boy, Jian Jun. Mr. Zhou hands me a stick of purple sugar cane. I tear the husk off with my teeth and munch the yellow pulp. We grin at each other and gnaw the fibres.

With the help of a dictionary we learn that he has hot noodles and beef for breakfast. I eat toasted bread. The Zhou family lives in a three-room apartment on the fourth floor of a concrete high rise. They have a bedroom, a living room, a shared kitchen and a laundry. Outside there is no playground for Jian Jun. No pets are allowed, except goldfish or birds in cages. Jian Jun likes playing with snails, and watching the Mickey Mouse cartoons on television.

This is China—the people. Although we are stuck under a gloomy sky, there are no complaints, no demands for special privileges. People chat, enjoy food, take out shopping to examine their new shoes or new dress. Children are cuddled; old people helped to the toilet outside on the platform.

"Hello. Allow me to introduce myself." A shy soldier stands near my bunk. He carries a BBC book on how to speak English. He says, "My name is Mr. Shui. I am pleased to meet you."

We have a pleasant time learning words of each other's language. Other Chinese visit us to sit on the bunk and meet a stranger from the West. Mr. Shui searches rapidly from page to page in his book, looks up words in the dictionary and suddenly says, his eyes gleaming with pride and happiness, "We belong to one turning planet."

Later, I go outside to walk for a while along the platform. A man comes to me and holds out a basket. Partly buried in straw are porcelain horses. A voice behind me says, "Five yuan. Tang Dynasty." It is a middle-aged man in a

A sleeping car in a Chinese train.

suit. He hands me his business card, one side in Chinese, the other in English. Professor Li Deren, a specialist in making maps.

Maybe he will know something about the location of my lost city. He asks, "Will you have dinner with me in the buffet car?"

I follow him through his carriage—soft sleeper car 22. Soft sleepers are for officials, foreigners and wealthy Chinese. They have a washroom beside the toilet. The buffet car is full of cigarette smoke. We sit at a table by the window and drink a can of Changlese lemonade. "It is expensive," says Professor Li, "because we add an education tax to luxury goods."

Hao Wen from Widow Town

We talk about his work. "There is a new age in the world," Professor Li says. "The information revolution. Now our computers design not just a river canal, but the best ways to look after the people and the environment. There is so much to do. All day at university is very busy with teaching, guests, research. When I come home at night, I put on my overcoat, wrap blankets around my legs and work on the ten pages I must write each day of a textbook."

Then we begin to talk about the accuracy of maps. While we discuss Li-jien, a young man walks into the buffet car and looks at the empty seat beside me. He sits and begins to talk with Professor Li, who translates for me. Hao Wen is the sales manager of a factory making fashionable Western clothes for women. Professor Li explains, "Hao Wen is from Widow Town. It has a sad history. Husbands go abroad to make their family fortune. Some see their wives only once or twice in a lifetime."

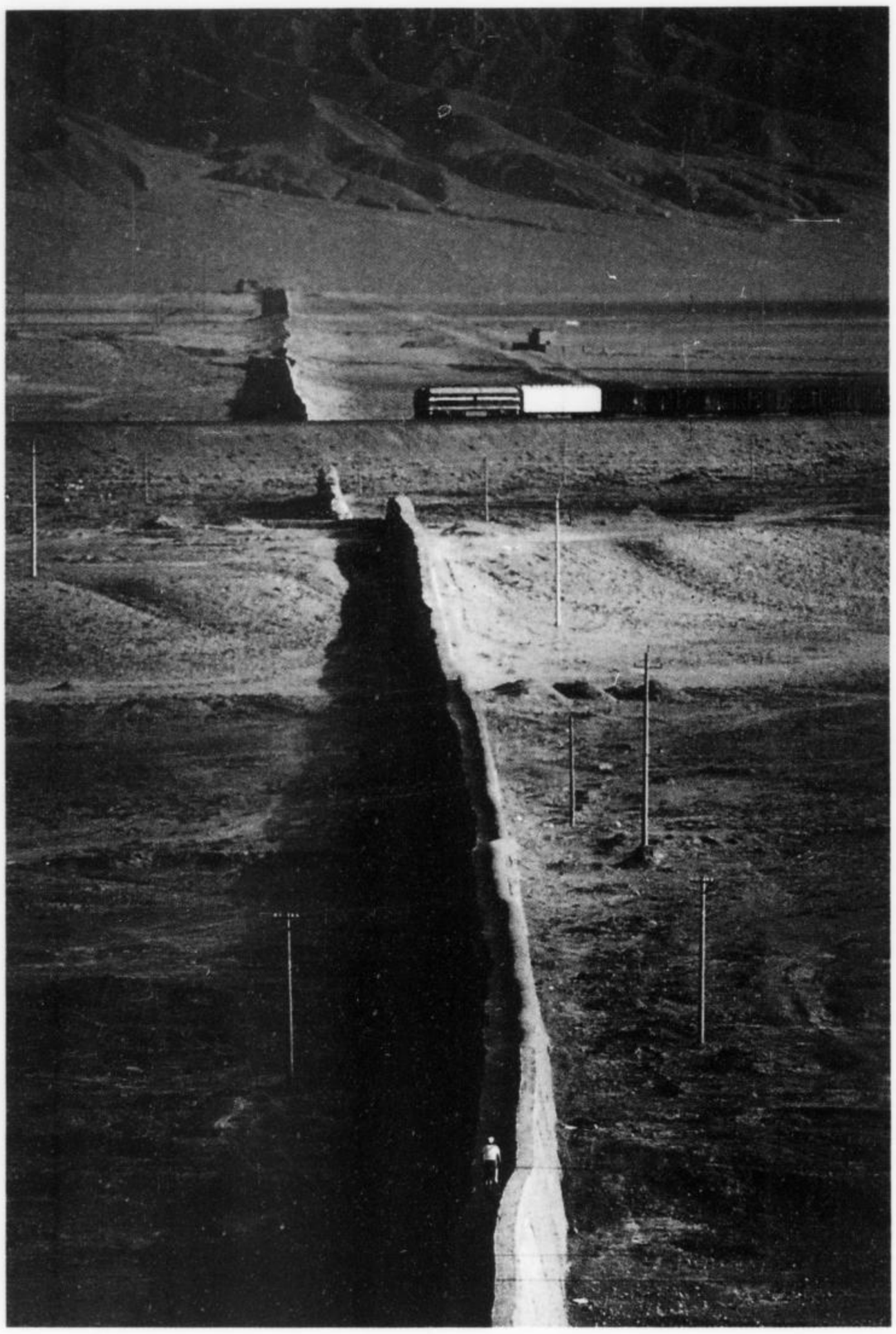
"Will Hao Wen be a widow-maker?"

"Already he has bought two houses with air-conditioning. One day he will choose a suitable wife." Professor Li is proud of the young man. "Hao Wen is the new China. He only went to high school, but he owns a car. He pays for his brother to be educated at university to become a modern manager. That way, his children and mine can develop more factories."

"How large is your factory?" I ask Hao Wen.

He smiles. "It is not all in one place. My father sends sewing machines through Hong Kong. I put these small machines in farms where the families sew the clothes to the latest overseas designs. Young women always want new fashions, so I have 700 machines working. My factory is just a shed where I store the clothes before selling them to big department stores. Already I export to more than thirty countries," he grins. "Even Australia."

Whistles blow and the train jolts. I return to



A train wends its way through arid terrain near the city of Jiayuguan in Gansu province at the western end of the Great Wall.

my bunk before the doors are locked that keep apart the soft and hard sleeper carriages. Soon I will sleep while the train takes me deeper into the heart of China, and closer to the ancient city that lies in wait for me out in the desert.

The invisible city

The desert reminds me of outback Australia. Heat shimmers from the ground, making distant mountains float and break apart in the mirage. Beside me, in the Lanzhou University Toyota Crown car, sits Mr. Zhang Hulaguang. He is a blanket-maker, power-house technician and nuclear physicist who has come with me as a friend and interpreter.

On the horizon glimmer the eternal snows of the Qilian Mountains. Where the mountains disappear over the curve of the earth is the area where the city of Rome looked down on the Silk Road.

Mr. Zhang looks at the barren, stony soil. "One drop of water is as precious as a drop of oil. Some farmers go into the mountains and carry out snow to water their crops." He sighs. "Only 2,000 years ago this was good land. Now it is desert. What has made the temperature rise by 4 degrees in that time? It is the same right across to the Caspian Sea. Perhaps we have cut down too many trees. Now our children must plant and care for the new trees we grow."

Ahead is the town of Yongchang. I sit forward eagerly. The documents in my bag show Li-jien just south of this place. Yongchang is a town of narrow streets, mud and pebble walls, a market with the body of a pig hanging from a hook, and in the centre of town a huge gate with high arches to pass through and a green roof on top with eaves like big curved wings.

Mr. Zhang takes me to the government headquarters. I wait outside while he talks to officials. High above, two jet fighter planes swoop and roar in mock battle. Mr. Zhang returns with two men.

Before long our shyness is lost as we talk excitedly about Li-jien. We wave our arms about, interrupt, dispute dates, swallow twigs and leaves with our tea, and Mr. Zhang translates brilliantly as we charge over old battle grounds and run backwards and forwards through centuries.

"Come on," says Cultural Secretary Zhang Yu. "We think we know where Li-jien is. Why don't we go and look now?"

It is a race against the setting sun. We all cram into the Toyota and speed out of town and along a narrow dirt track. We drive straight for the mountains as though all the devils of hell are chasing us.

"Here," says Cultural Secretary Zhang Yu. The car bounces along a dry river bed and stops beside a village. I run up the river bank and see mud brick walls of the village, a girl standing among her cattle, smoke from kitchens, yellow hay piled on roofs, television antennas. There is no sign of Roman ruins.

I take photographs in many directions, aware that my eye has seen something that escapes my recognition.

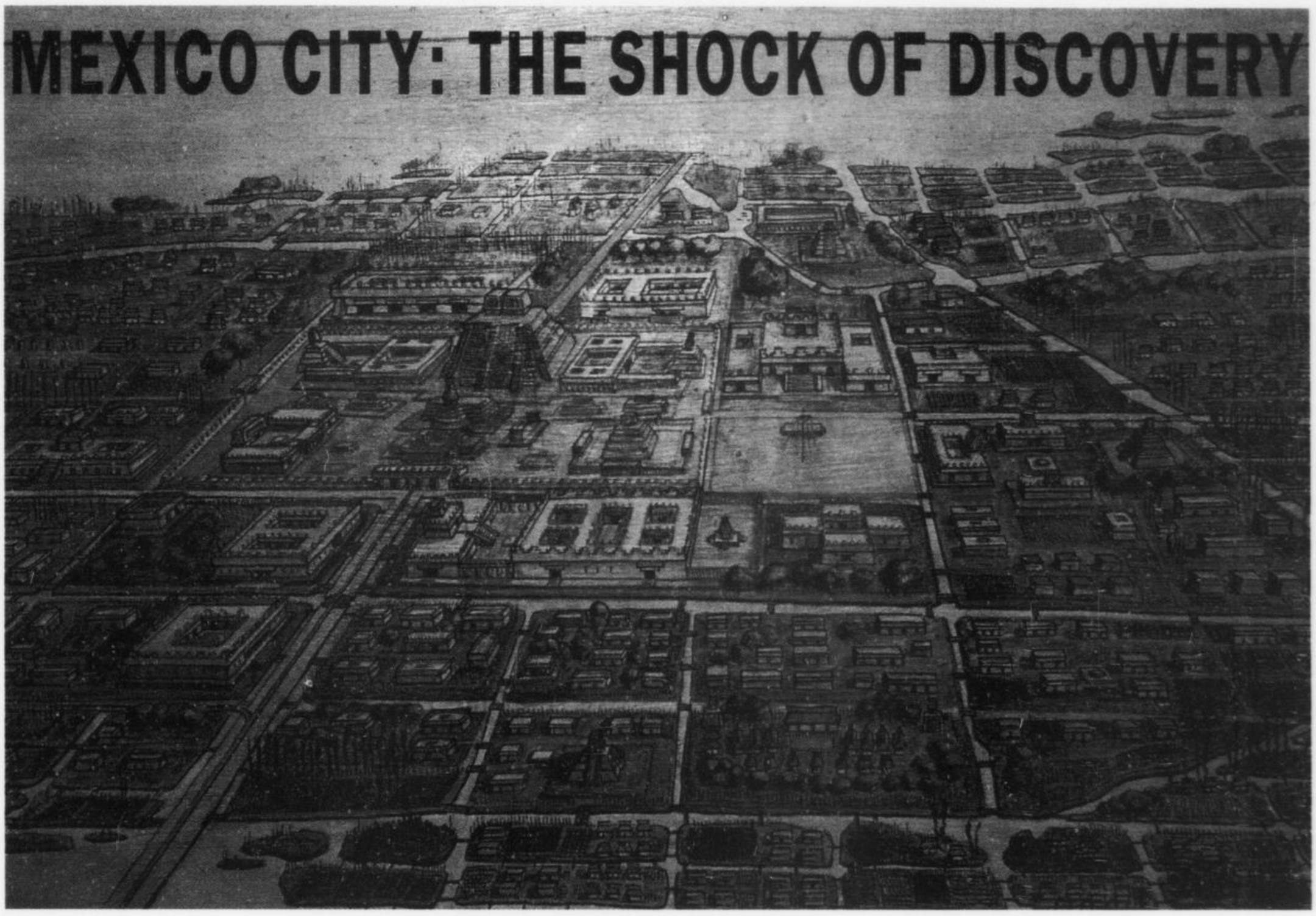
"Li-jien is beneath this village," says the Cultural Secretary.

With a thrill of excitement and anticipation I know that what I failed to recognize today will reveal itself in its own time. But now the sun is setting, and we must return to Yongchang for an official banquet.

I am happy. Li-jien is so close. I look out at the beauty of the desert in the last soft light of the day. The search for Li-jien has just begun. White ice gleams on the roofs of Yongchang. The stars of Orion, the Hunter, glow in the darkening sky. In early Spring I will be back. ■

DAVID HARRIS
is an Australian historian and writer who in 1989 discovered ruins of the lost Roman city of Li-jien, in China's Gansu province, near the Gobi Desert. The full story of his search for Li-jien is told in his *Black Horse Odyssey: Search for the Lost City of Rome in China* (Wakefield Press, Kent Town, South Australia, 1991).

MEXICO CITY: THE SHOCK OF DISCOVERY



Mexico City stands on the site of the ancient Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan, shown here in a contemporary painting preserved in the Mexico City Museum.

THE existence of Mexico City, the world's largest city at that time, was totally unsuspected. Its name had a strange ring to it, like a place-name that might have been conjured up in the imagination or the garbling of the mysterious sounds of an unknown language.

Long before Europeans discovered Mexico City they had received their first impressions of a great Amerindian city when they came to Tlaxcala. There they were struck with a mixture of astonishment and admiration that did not impede their ability to count and take stock, European cities serving as references for measurement and judgment. The Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés described it in the following terms: "The city of Tlaxcala is so big and so admirable that even if I do not say all I could about it, the little I shall say is almost incredible, for it is much bigger and stronger than Granada, with buildings just as beautiful and with many more citizens than Granada had at the time it was captured. And it is much better supplied with local commodities. . . . ."

These splendid cities that the conquistadors found in Mexico disturbed their way of looking at the world, its inhabitants and the ultimate purposes of Creation. An encounter with naked savages scattered through inhospitable tropical jungles could have fitted coherently into a catalogue of what was then known about humanity. But what could be made of these immense cities, this dense urban fabric that provided the framework of a nation of more than twenty million people? It was a truly unexpected world, perhaps because it could not have been predicted in the context of what was then known about the planet.

The sight of Mexico City on that fatal day of 9 November 1519, when Cortés "discovered" it by marching into it, made America even more difficult to understand. It was as if a veil of opacity cast by the irreducible otherness of an unexpected world had been added to the amazement and wonder of an unexpected spectacle.

There is no doubt that the city made an astonishing impression, leading the narrator—the conquistador and chronicler Bernal Díaz del Castillo—to make sense of it by looking for comparisons in fantastic fiction and the hazy world of dreams. "When we saw so many cities and towns built on water and on firm land and that road that ran so straight and level towards Mexico City," he wrote, "we were stunned, and we said that it looked like the enchanted things described in the book of Amadis, because of the lofty towers and temples and the buildings they had in the water, all in stone and whitewashed. Some of our soldiers even wondered if what they were seeing was not a dream. . . ." ■

Excerpts from "Mexico, la cité que l'on n'attendait pas", by Georges Baudot in *Destins Croisés, Cinq Siècles de Rencontres avec les Amérindiens* © UNESCO/Bibliothèque Albin Michel Histoire, Paris, 1992.

Interview with Aleksandar Petrovic

My friends the gypsies

Aleksandar Petrovic is a leading figure in Yugoslav cinema. His film *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* won the Palme d'Or at the 1967 Cannes Film Festival.

■ Why do you like Gypsies? How did you get to know them in the first place?

—As far back as I can remember, I've always felt compassion for those little raggamuffins you see in the street and those young mothers with babies in their laps and hands outstretched.

Today in Serbia there is unprecedented privation. Some 30 per cent of Serbs are on the edge of starvation. Because of shortages of medical supplies, mental patients are even being tied up in psychiatric hospitals, where they die of hunger.

And the Gypsies in Serbia are worse off than everyone else. I have never seen so many four- and five-year-old Gypsy children out on the street before. You see ten-year-olds at crossroads, offering to wash your car windows for a coin or two, always ready to laugh and joke. In summer they go barefoot, and they're not much better shod in winter.

Because they are exposed to life's harsh realities from infancy, they are far more mature and quick-witted than children from more privileged backgrounds. They soon learn the ins and outs of the black market, which is growing by leaps and bounds with the economic chaos that Serbia is now in. They sell anything: car fuel, old clothes, toilet paper, cigarettes imported from Romania. Now that it has replaced Trieste as the source of supply, Romania has become the poor man's El Dorado.

When I look into the great dark eyes of these children of the wind and poverty, I feel that I'm looking into the mystery of their origins. No one knows where Gypsies come from, but they are a people in their own right. Their eternal sense of freedom and music attracted me to them and inspired me to make my film *I Even Met Happy Gypsies*.

My Lord, if you reincarnate me again after my death,
Let me be a Gypsy
Let me choose one of the ways
The way of joy that will make me a happy man
Or the way of death and a new encounter with you.

Aleksandar Petrovic

■ **What is the film's original title?**

—The title in Serbo-Croat was *The Feather Collectors*, which is more evocative for us since we're used to seeing Gypsies on our roads carrying enormous bundles of goose feathers that they sell in the villages.

Unlike the Gypsies of Bosnia and Croatia, most Serbian Gypsies are sedentary except those in the east near the Romanian and Bulgarian borders, where you can still meet nomads such as the last bear-leaders from Pozarevac. In the spring the whole family clambers into an old cart drawn by a nag and does the rounds of weddings and village fêtes.

■ **You say they are sedentary. Where do they live?**

—Gypsy dwellings are usually found on the edges of small towns and villages. In Belgrade they live in certain central neighbourhoods and like their forebears work for the city on road maintenance. They seem to lead a more human existence in towns and villages than in cities, plying their traditional trades and occupations as collectors of scrap metal, goose-down merchants and—more rarely these days—as blacksmiths or small traders. The interiors of their little houses are simply whitewashed whereas we Serbs like to decorate our walls. The façades, on the other hand, are painted in vivid colours and imaginative designs. Their little houses look as if they might be part of a fairy tale, but what with alcohol, poverty and sometimes, unfortunately, petty crime, there is nothing romantic about the life they lead.

The crime rate in Serbia today is rising by leaps and bounds. And although the Gypsies comprise only 2 per cent of the Serb population, one of four offenders is a Gypsy. Yet the Gypsies are better accepted by the Serbs than they are in many other places.

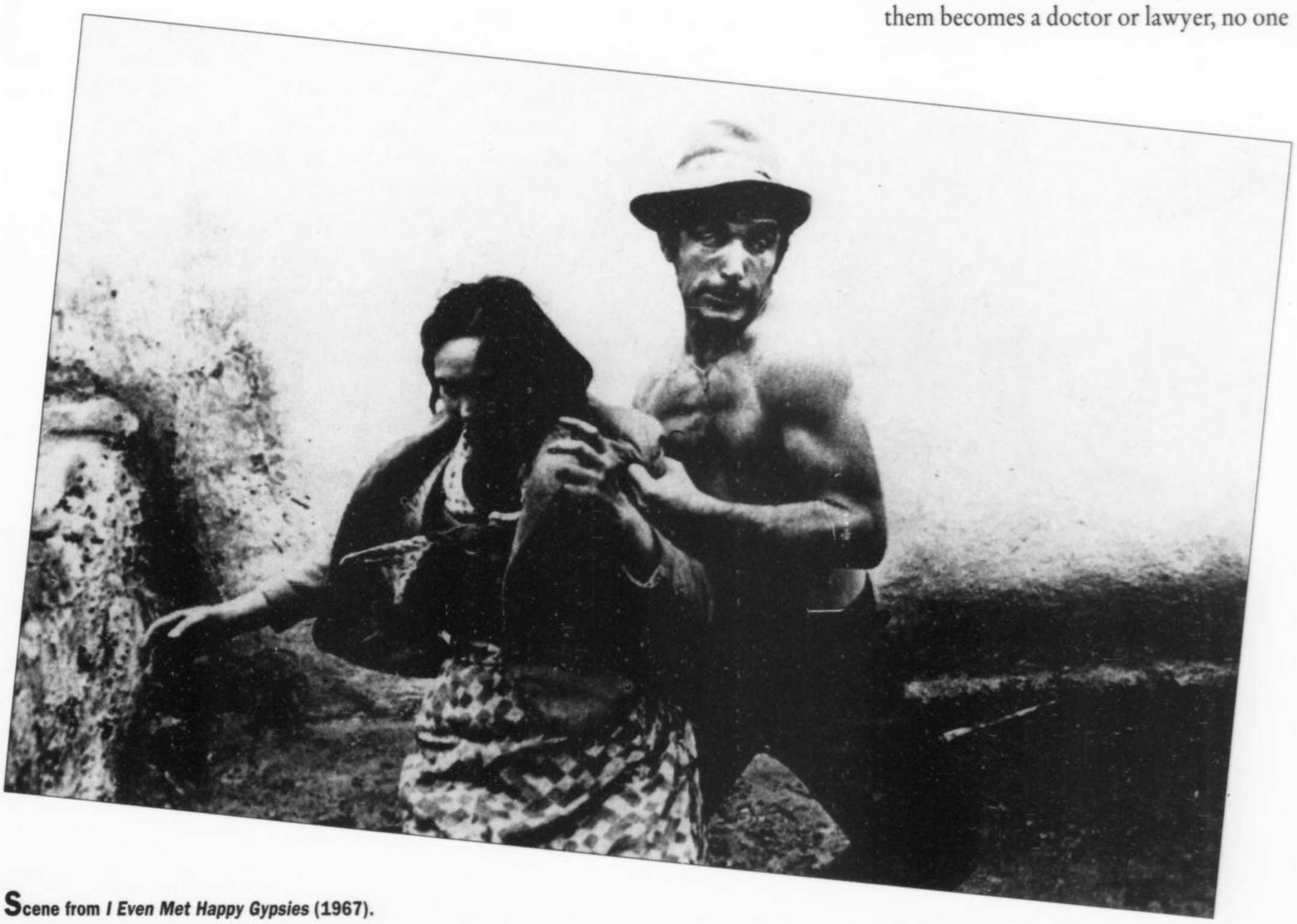
NOBODY THINKS OF HIM AS A GYPSY ANY MORE, NOT EVEN HIS OWN FAMILY

The ties of friendship between Serbs and Gypsies are so strong that a Gypsy singer appearing on Belgrade television recently said jokingly, "You Serbs should put up a monument to the Gypsies because we're the only ones left who still love you!"

He was referring of course to this awful, dirty war that is ravaging parts of the former Yugoslavia.

Serbian goodwill towards the Gypsies does nothing to improve the Gypsies' condition, because the word Gypsy also designates someone who belongs to a certain social level—the lowest.

Whenever, through sheer grit, one of them becomes a doctor or lawyer, no one



Scene from *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* (1967).

The Gypsies did not arrive in the Balkans at the same time as the Turks. They are already mentioned in Serb manuscripts of the eleventh century, and the Turks did not occupy southeastern Europe until 300 years later. About half a million Gypsies live in the former Yugoslavia. But Gypsies do not declare themselves as such at census time. They assume instead the nationality of the people among whom they live. ■ **A.P.**

thinks of him as a Gypsy any more, not even his own family!

■ **How much of a barrier is the Gypsy language?**

—For Gypsies the language problem is particularly acute because on the one hand their language has no alphabet and on the other they express themselves poorly in their adopted language. Some non-Gypsies go so far as to claim Gypsies are incapable of learning other languages, which is obviously nonsense! First of all they speak their own tongue—although it has diversified into so many different dialects that sometimes Gypsies from different parts of the world find it very hard to understand each other. In fact, all Gypsies are bilingual since they also use the language of their host country.

■ **Do they get normal schooling?**

—In Serbian, Macedonian, Slovenian and other schools, Gypsy children are taught in a language that is not their own. So they are already at a disadvantage in relation to the other children. Moreover their mother tongue is not a written language, but it is the language they use at home. And sometimes too, their teachers have a racist attitude towards them.

PALM-READERS WHO CAN RECREATE THE WORLD

Not long ago a sociologist tried to show, in an article that appeared in Belgrade, that Gypsy children are intellectually inferior and that in a normal class they hold the others back. He proposed that special classes and programmes be adapted to Gypsy children's "intelligence levels". That's the kind of nonsense you still hear about Gypsies!

It might be a good idea to give Gypsy children special lessons, but without separating them from their class, so that they can improve their skills in the national language. Otherwise how can they possibly emerge from poverty?

■ **How much is known about their culture?**

Two scenes from *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* (1967).

—Gypsy mythology, which has been transmitted orally down the centuries, is symbolically very rich, and their poetry is unreal, or rather surreal, woven from dreams.

Although there is no written history of the Gypsy language (or rather languages)—and without written traces the life and history of a people are shrouded in obscurity—the oral tradition has kept alive in the Gypsy mind the most dramatic episodes of their past.

In Serbia there are whole families of Gypsy musicians. One of the best known are the Lakatoshes, one branch of which lives in Hungary, the other in Serbia. I met Mikhaïlo Lakatosh in a remote village in northern Serbia. He was singing one of his songs, *Djelem Djelem*, which, after being sung in my film, has become the Gypsy national anthem. "I wandered endless byways/I even met happy Gypsies/Oh the Gypsies, oh what men. . . ."

In Gypsy language the word Rom also means "man". All non-Gypsies are called Gadjos, or "foreigners".

ETERNAL OUTSIDERS

If the true measure of humanity is the amount of freedom that people manage to win for themselves in this life, then Gypsies are truly men—Rom.

Like everyone else, Gypsies are fond of money. But they'll never sacrifice an immediate pleasure—a moment of intensity—for a few gold coins. Their attachment to freedom is not a rational choice, it is part of the natural order of things. They feel it in their bones. It brings radiance to their sombre lives of mingled joy and pain.

The euphoria generated by a sense of boundless freedom can lead to atrocious crimes. The Gypsy hero of my film, who refuses to think about the consequences of his acts, is a character out of Dostoyevsky. He doesn't think about the consequences before committing his crime. For example, he doesn't say to himself, "I must not kill, because if I do I'll go to prison for ten years." He goes through with his murderous act, knowing full well that he is bringing about his own ruin. A little later in the film he is watching television with his family when he suddenly kisses his children, takes his hat and leaves. And that's that. He has moved into another world.

Compared with the fleeting sense of power, by which he crosses over to "the other side" of social morality, his personal interest counts for little. He is ready to sacrifice his life for absolute freedom, through which he can affirm his personality.

Europe was recently horrified by murders committed by two Gypsies who, while under the influence of drugs, massacred an entire family in northern Italy. One was tried and found guilty, but the other chose to kill himself. The police surrounded his parents' house, and he agreed to surrender but only after having a coffee and a cigarette in the courtyard. When he had finished his cigarette, he shot himself through the heart. He had set off on a road without end, signifying by his act the mysterious link that exists between crime and freedom.

Less attached to their personal interests than others, perhaps less "rational" because they scorn to consider the long-term consequences of their acts, Gypsies seem to me more sensitive than others to the world's beauty and its suffering and more susceptible to unhappiness, for they are more vulnerable to the call of evil—if that's what it has to be called—that we have in each of us. ■

ALEKSANDAR PETROVIC is a French film-maker of Serbian origin. In addition to *I Even Met Happy Gypsies*, he has directed *The Master and Margaret* (1972), which won the CIDALC prize at the Venice Film Festival, and *Group Portrait with Lady* (1977). His latest film, *Migrations*, has not yet been released but was shown at the *Festival des étonnants voyageurs* at Saint-Malô (France) in May 1993.

How a writer of Jewish origin, a defender of human rights, came to know those he calls "exiles in their own country"

The son of Polish Jewish immigrants looks at the Palestinians

by Maurice Rajsfus

For as far back as I can remember I have always pricked up my ears whenever I heard someone talking about Palestine, a mythical, far-off land where my father lived and worked hard as a young man. He used to tell me that Palestine was a land of orange trees and sunshine, and I thought it was a Jewish country. In 1923, however, my father finally chose to settle in France, which he saw as a haven of liberty.

In Russian Poland before the First World War my father had been a Zionist. After he moved to France, he ceased to be one. I never knew the reason for this change of heart and I never asked, because ideological problems had not yet begun to torment me.

EN
MUSIQUE
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A ÉTÉ FAIT,
SAUF
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Découvrez aujourd'hui LA MUSIQUE

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LA MUSIQUE ESSENTIELLE prend ses sources dans les univers qui sont les idéologies du siècle nouveau: spiritualité et élévation; préoccupation environnementale; recherche du mieux-être de l'homme, soif de l' Ailleurs, mondialisation.

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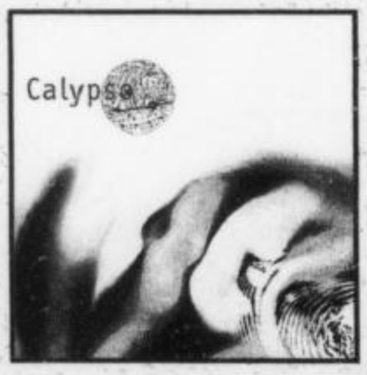

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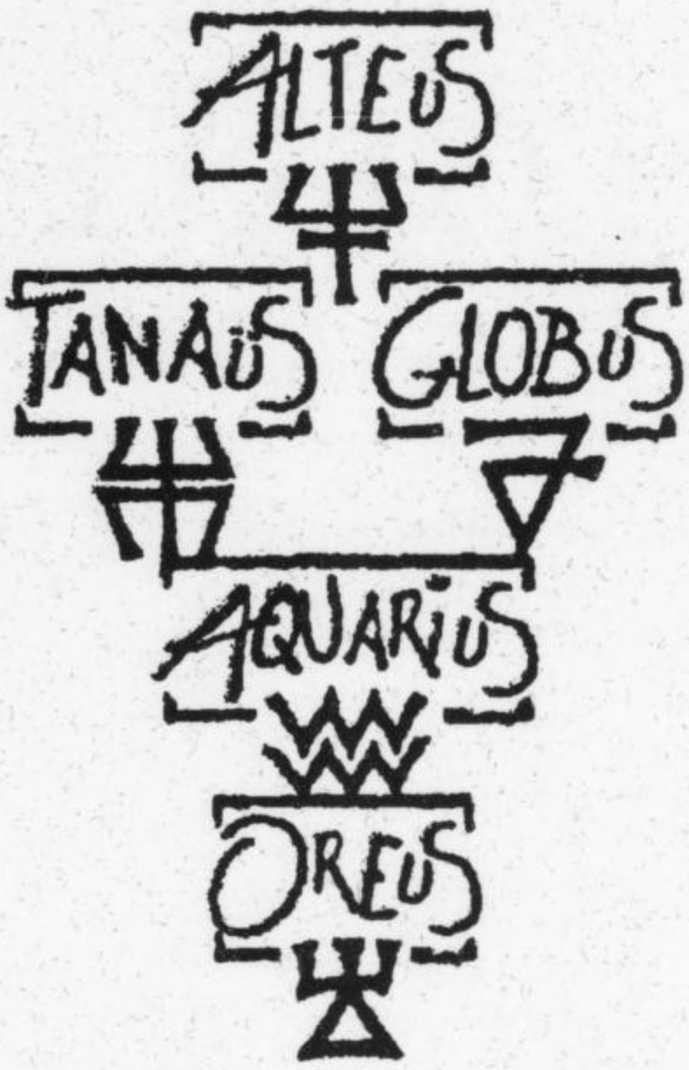

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So I was not a Zionist by virtue of cultural heritage. However, I accepted that other Jews might think of going to settle in Palestine. I was not yet aware of the colonial aspect of the problem. I did not imagine that Jews might behave as exploiters of other peoples.

It was not until 1984 that I was ready, physically and morally, to make my first trip to the region. I had to go and see for myself what was happening there. In the plane I felt anxious. People all around me were impatient to see the land of the Bible as tourists and became tremendously excited. These men and women, even the children, suddenly seemed alien to me. I was travelling to a country under permanent siege, the army of which was occupying neighbouring territory in a less than kindly fashion. And my fellow passengers were as joyful as if they were on the way to Paradise. I was concerned. Their joy seemed dangerous to me.

A country in arms

On my first day in Israel I was more struck by the difficulty of being with Israelis than drawn towards Palestinians, whom I glimpsed from afar—they did their best to be inconspicuous. It is true that very few real natives of the place ventured into the white city. However, I could not help but notice that Israeli labourers were strangely absent from Jerusalem's many building-sites.

The sight of this country in arms at a time when there was no threat to civil peace seemed to me more than strange; it was fearsome. The army was not in barracks but permanently out on the streets, in public places and on the public transport system. I could not bear these soldiers, these boys and girls so full of life and laughter who would bump into me on the buses with their loaded Uzi machine-guns.

Who were they waging war against here in Israel? The armed civilians strolling up Ben Yehuda Street in their white shirts contrasted oddly with the crowds of people jostling around the ice-cream sellers and thronging the café terraces. Was it a paranoid show of strength? An attempt to inspire fear? Self-intoxication?

I soon thought I had found an answer to these questions. On my second day, I was making my way into the old city through the Jaffa Gate when suddenly I came across an odious sight. A group of children, apparently from a town in the occupied territories, was crossing the street under the watchful eye of a woman monitor carrying the inevitable Uzi machine-gun. At the same moment a Palestinian boy pushing a heavy cart was coming from the opposite direction. The cart was so heavy that the boy was unable to stop, and the children had to slow down. At that moment the monitor's happily smiling face became contorted with hatred. Giving vent to a stream of invective, the charming young thing invited the delivery boy to go around them. He had to give way.

Left, passers-by at the Damascus Gate, one of the entrances to the Old City of Jerusalem.
Opposite page, an Arab market in Jerusalem.

"Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians have started to talk to each other. Will they create the kind of common economic unit that will really make the desert blossom and transform the region into a Switzerland of the Middle East?"

Forty years before, it was a good average Frenchman—not a cop—who had thrown me out of a metro car that I had boarded by mistake, brutally informing me that because I was wearing a yellow star the only car I had the right to use was at the rear of the train.

"I am from Palestine"

Right from the start I felt very uncomfortable with these triumphant Israelis. But where were the Palestinians? My first real contact with them took place a few days after my arrival, when my pal Michel Warshawski, formerly of Strasbourg, suggested that we visit one of his friends in Deheishe refugee camp near Bethlehem. That day the camp entrance on the Hebron road was barred with rolls of barbed wire and cement-filled barrels. To get inside we had to go all round this grim settlement built on a hillside. In the rocky alleyways between dwellings that looked more like glorified hovels than low-

MAURICE RAJSFUS,
French journalist and writer, is the author of some 15 works, most of which deal with the Second World War period. He wrote *Mon père l'Etranger* (1989) in memory of his father, a Polish Jewish immigrant who was deported to Auschwitz in 1942, and has published two books on the Palestinian problem, *Retour de Jordanie. Les réfugiés palestiniens dans le royaume hachémite* (1990) and *Palestine, Chronique des événements courants* (1990).

"The sight of this country in arms at a time when there was no threat to civil peace seemed to me more than strange; it was fearsome. I could not bear these soldiers, these boys and girls so full of life and laughter who would bump into me on the buses with their loaded Uzi machine-guns."

grade suburban housing, I suddenly felt that I was walking through a ghetto.

Although profoundly shaken, I had not yet made up my mind to feel active solidarity with the Palestinians. But it was no longer possible for me to regard the Israelis in the same way. I was repelled by the behaviour of the Jewish colonists—their certainty that right was on their side . . . and might as well!

I spoke to children who described their villages, places where they had never set foot. Then followed the disturbing refrain, "I am from Palestine!" It did not sound as if they had learned it by rote. The country that had been wiped off the map was still alive.

My two subsequent visits—in January 1986 and November 1987—only strengthened my impression of being in a colonized country whose inhabitants were submissive in appearance only. On 28 November 1987 Hamdi, a journalist from Deheishe camp, told me: "We don't intend to remain passive until the end of time, but there's no doubt that if we lift a finger they'll throw tanks at us, maybe even planes!"

He smiled sadly as he spoke. In the three years since I had met Hamdi, his happy optimism had gradually faded away. He appeared nervous, even feverish. His time in jail, followed by a long period of house arrest, had done nothing to boost his morale. He must have foreseen darker days ahead.

The next day I left Israel, never to return again. A week later the *Intifada* began.

"I have a dream!" said Martin Luther King, a man who knew the value of words, when he called for the fulfilment of an impossible dream. Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians had to talk to each other some day. Now they have begun to do so. Will they create the kind of common economic unit that will really make the desert blossom and transform the region into a Switzerland of the Middle East? A confederation where differences would not prevent the implementation of a generous programme?

While waiting in hopes of such a conclusion, I do not forget that I have a standing invitation to visit my friend Anwar in Hebron—as soon as he gives up driving his Paris taxi—and I fully intend to honour it some day. ■

Israeli soldiers on the West Bank.

A European artist discovers the salt of the earth

by Jacques Leenhardt

Above, traces left by salt gatherers on Lake Sayula in Mexico (600 to 900 A.D.).

Countless are the representations of the Other, and infinite the choice of ways that lead to them.

The artist is like the traveller, always tuned into a world that speaks the language of the body, of space, of the wind that sweeps through space, and also the language of vision and light. Before coming into contact with ideas, an artist embraces different kinds of matter and things, colours and sounds.

Lake Sayula is in the Mexican state of Jalisco. French artist Jean-Charles Pigeau had travelled the length and breadth of Mexico. He had pitted himself against El Tajín and the classical grandeur of Chichén Itzá. He had combed the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific in his quest for a

site where he could install his steel mirrors to face the sun. He wanted a space that was totally free of anecdote. Far from the monuments erected by civilizations, he hoped to discover the very foundations on which they are based.

He had chosen Mexico so that the light captured by his polished parabolas would appear in its primal, absolute brilliance, in a state somehow prior to the forms in which man captures and symbolizes light. Materialized as temples and pyramids, the light of the Mexican plateau has already lost what it must have given to monumentality. Pigeau wanted to experience it as the Indians had known it—immemorial and predating constructions erected to memory. To that end he crossed the coast and the plateaux from east to west until he reached Jalisco state, where he saw a lake that reflected the sky.

Gazing at the expanse of Lake Sayula and the ring of green hills surrounding it, Pigeau knew he would have to wait until the water fed by winter rains had evaporated. This landscape, which he had discovered the previous year, did not seem to bear the emblematic marks of pre-Columbian cultures. Yet it was those cultures that he wished to encounter through his quest for light. Since it had no pyramids or temples, Lake Sayula, which dries out each year in the sun, was the natural product of light. That is why he returned there. He would have to wait.

Symbolizing the cycle of life, water and sun

The lake gradually turned into a vast expanse of silt. In places, the dried crust began to crack. Soon it would be possible to walk over it without getting one's feet wet. In a few days' time, Pigeau would be able to arrange his concave mirrors, focusing them on a hollow in the mountains bordering on the Lake Sayula site, very low on the horizon.

The waters of Lake Sayula are brackish. Pigeau had not yet realized, but he may have unconsciously chosen the lake because of that. No vegetation interferes with the perfect plane the lake waters offer the eye, or the plane formed by the silt once they have disappeared. On the dried-out lake, Pigeau was going to ressuscitate, by pointing his mirrors skywards, the momentarily absent reflective waters. Thus he would symbolize the cycle of life, water and sun. He would bring light and heat back down to earth. With a propitiatory gesture, he would mimic the birth of our inhabitable world, a thousand leagues from any inhabited land. Or at least that was what he thought.

But because artists create their ideas solely out of matter, matter responds to them—matter which has always been informed with the memory of the people who have worked, transformed and inhabited it. Human beings inhabit matter just as matter inhabits human beings, and a site is always the form taken by nature when humans imprint their lives on it.

Meeting the men of salt

The surface of the lake was almost uniformly cracked. The time to arrange the polished parabolas on the hardened silt was approaching. And yet something in the distance disrupted the harmony. Pigeau moved closer and was clearly able to make out circles on the ground of almost exactly the same diameter as his mirrors—slightly concave circles in which the water was taking longer to dry out. Their circumference was marked by pottery shards.

Over a thousand years ago, at a time known to archaeologists as the Sayula period, Indians in the region had discovered how to exploit the lake's brackish waters, as Antonio de Ciudad Real described in his *Tratado Curioso y Docto de la Grandezas de la Nueva España* ("A Curious and Learned Treatise on the Grandeur of New Spain"). After capturing the salt water in shallow basins dug in the bottom of the lake, they speeded up its evaporation by lighting fires and then gathered the salt.

The circles that Pigeau was looking at were therefore aquatic hearths, traces of humans who used nature by thwarting it, by pushing its logic to extremes through ingenuity and artifice.

That was how Pigeau's devices came into contact with those of an ancient Indian civilization. All of a sudden he discovered that this out-of-the-way expanse had been entirely occupied by the labour of human beings. After going back into the past beyond the cultures whose jade objects and ball games, in full colour photographs, now adorn coffee-table books, he thought he had at last found the very origin of his own impetus. And now, after moving so far out of line as to be on the verge of deculturation, he had found human beings at work, human salt collectors. The people of Sayula did more than collect salt, they shaped it. They made cakes of it and modelled figures with it—"men of salt", in Antonio de Ciudad Real's words—heads of salt, busts of salt and thousands of other figures. That was how the Indians created a world out of the primal silt that had been doomed by the brackish waters of the lake to remain barren.

Taking his time, because such encounters encourage one to see everything in the context of eternity, Pigeau laid out his parabolas next to the Indian hearths. The sunlight allowed itself to be captured with the same benevolence it has shown in drying out the lake since the beginning of time, so that the artist in each of us can make statues of salt and light parabolas. ■

French artist Jean-Charles Pigeau's parabolic mirrors on the parched bed of Lake Sayula.

JACQUES LEENHARDT, of France, is a professor at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris and president of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA) and of Crestet Art Centre (Vaucluse, France). Among his published works are *Les Amériques latines en France* (1992) and *Dans les jardins de Roberto Burle Marx* (1994).

"On the dried-out lake, the artist would symbolize the cycle of life, water and sun. He would bring light and heat back down to earth."

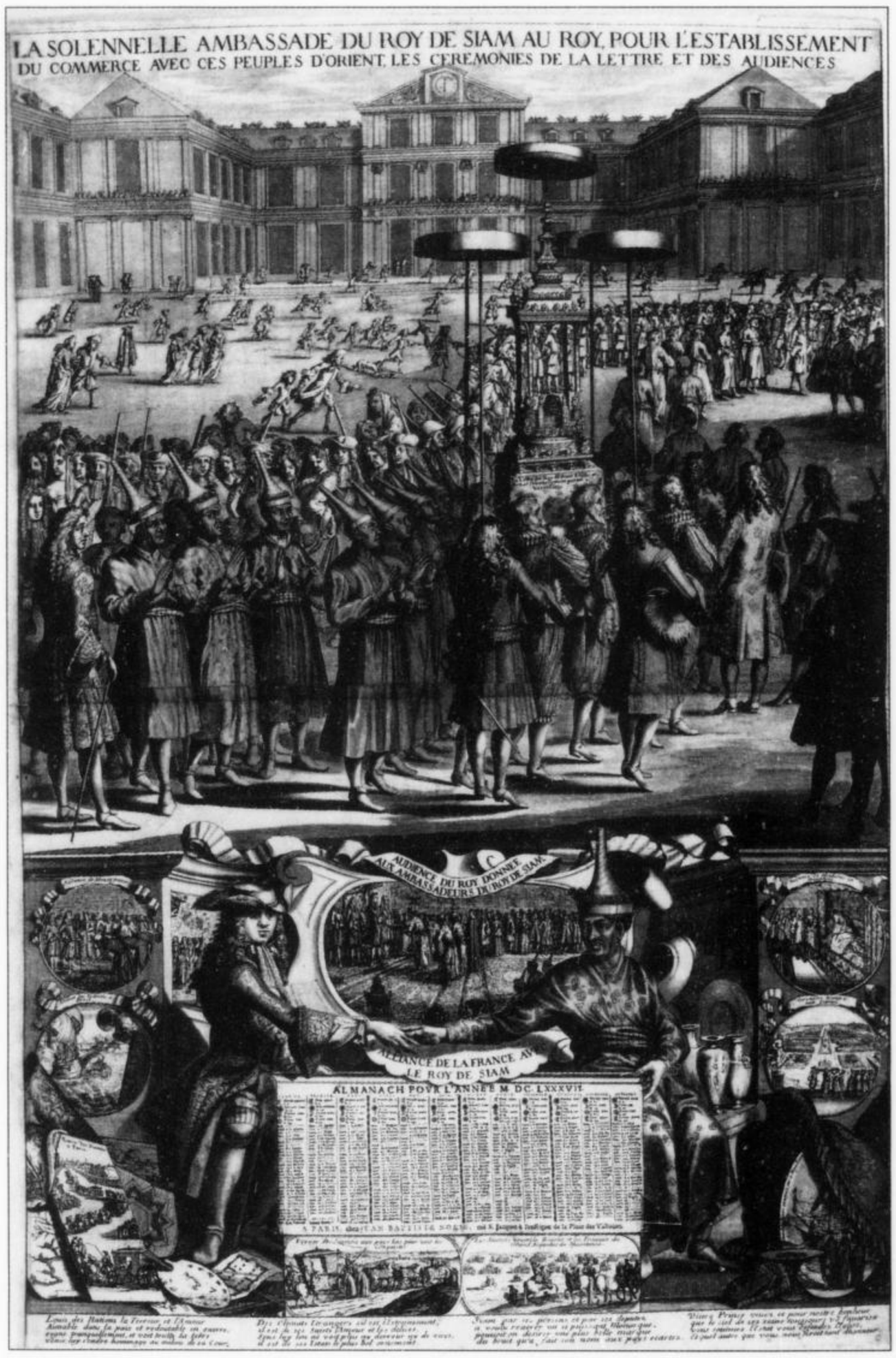
We are Siamese if you please

by Morgan Sportès

In his novel* Persian Letters *(1721), the French philosopher Montesquieu gave a satirical portrait of the society of his time, supposedly seen through the eyes of two visitors from the East. Did he know that some fifty years before, three ambassadors from Siam (today Thailand) had caused a sensation at the court of Louis XIV?

The three ambassadors sent by King Phra Narai to the court of Louis XIV at the end of the seventeenth century aroused widespread curiosity. They inspired novels and farces. Their likenesses were reproduced by the thousand in gazettes and almanachs, especially their flat noses and their pointed white ceremonial hats. Crowds of people swarmed around the landing-stage to greet them when they arrived. When they broke their journey to Paris at Nantes, Blois, Chambord and Vincennes, beautiful aristocratic ladies gave them a warm welcome, plying them with teasingly playful questions.

People were surprised that they washed every day and even several times a day. They wanted to know how the visitors managed to satisfy the twenty-odd wives each one was supposed to have.


LA SOLENNELLE AMBASSADE DU ROY DE SIAM AU ROY, POUR L'ESTABLISSEMENT
DU COMMERCE AVEC CES PEUPLES D'ORIENT, LES CEREMONIES DE LA LETTRE ET DES AUDIENCES
AUDIENCE DU ROY DONNÉE AUX AMBASSADEURS DU ROY DE SIAM.
ALLIANCE DE LA FRANCE AV LE ROY DE SIAM
ALMANACH POUR L'ANNÉE M DC LXXXVII

Siamese women are always half naked

The chief ambassador, Oc Khun Wisutra Sunthon (more commonly known as Kosapan) knew perfectly well how to behave in such circumstances and gave these ladies as good as he got, always with the greatest courtesy.

A paparazzo of that time, one Jean Donneau de Vizé, a hack who wrote for a weekly rag called the *Mercure Galant*, scrupulously noted it all down, especially the ambassador's rejoinders, which delighted the court. This Siamese gentleman was considered to be full of "honesty", "cool good sense" and "gallantry".

One day Madame de Seignelay, the very pretty wife of the Minister of the Navy, visited the château of Berny, where the ambassador was staying for a month, and insisted on being

told whether he considered French or Siamese women were more beautiful. Kosapan courteously replied that French women were more beautiful, that Madame de Seignelay was the most beautiful French woman he had ever seen, and that she would undoubtedly be the most beautiful woman in the world if only she would dress like a Siamese woman. It was only after much pressing that the interpreter, a well-travelled missionary who was blushing with confusion, was made to reveal exactly what Kosapan meant, namely that, "Siamese women are always half-naked." There was loud laughter, especially at Madame de Seignelay's expense. The story went all over Paris.

Kosapan was so intelligent and perceptive that he could "enter into each nation's idiosyncrasies, however different the nations may be."

He needed to have all his wits about him to keep track of the intrigues that went on in the wings of the great "theatre" of Versailles as he was shunted from dinners to high masses, from operas to light theatre. There was also plenty of walking—to the Orangerie at Versailles, for example. "A very big house indeed for simply sheltering trees," Kosapan noted.

Ambassador Kosapan becomes prime minister

The purpose of Ambassador Kosapan's mission to Versailles was to offer a trading post to Louis XIV in Singor (now Songkhla) in southern Siam, where the Compagnie des Indes Orientales and a handful of troops would establish themselves and provide a counterweight to the all-powerful Dutch.

Siam always played off one imperialist power against another: French against Dutch, English against French, Japanese against English and French, with the result that the country was never colonized.

France requested the right to build a fort outside Bangkok and sent a squadron of five vessels with 700 heavily armed soldiers to back up her claim. Kosapan was one of the main architects of the revolution that overthrew the prime minister, King Phra Narai himself, and resulted in the expulsion of the French. After being besieged in Bangkok for six months, the French surrendered and left the country in November 1688, exactly a year after their arrival.

The monarch who then came to the throne of Siam showed little gratitude to Kosapan. He appointed him prime minister, but a few years later began to distrust him, tortured him and had his nose cut off.

In 1700 Kosapan committed suicide. It seems that he always felt a certain nostalgia for what he called the "great and good kingdom of France". A German traveller who met him in Siam in 1690 saw several paintings of the Sun King and the most eminent members of his family hanging on the walls amidst the cobwebs.

Sic transit. . . . **M. S.** ■

The dark regions of idolatry

Kosapan soon formed an idea of the strange religious passions that were swirling through Louis XIV's kingdom, shaken by the anti-Protestant persecutions that followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

In the land of the Sun King there was "one" truth, i.e. Catholic. Idolaters and heretics had to submit . . . or go into exile. Fortified by these religious certainties, many courtiers and great noblemen asked Kosapan when he intended to renounce the "dark regions of idolatry" and discover the "true faith". To which Kosapan would answer diplomatically, "What is said of an unknown religion must seem ridiculous to people who know nothing about it and who believe in another, because it is natural to believe that the religion one has adopted or into which one is born is the best of all."

Sometimes he was more sharply questioned and put in a tight spot, whereupon he would make even more concessions. His reply to the Bishop of Tournay was, "Please obtain from the true God that I may know Him and that it may please Him to save me from the darkness I am in so that one day I may profess the true faith."

This remark delighted the French prelate, who thought that grace had already begun to descend on this idolater full of goodwill. The bishop would probably have been less inclined to indulge in wishful thinking if he had read the works of another bishop, Louis Laneau, who had spent twenty years in Siam. Laneau warned young missionaries who went to Siam to beware of the "irony" of the Siamese who only admit to us "that they are in darkness" in order to get us to understand that "we are in darkness ourselves." ■

"Three ambassadors sent by the King of Siam to the court of Louis XIV in the late seventeenth century aroused widespread curiosity. Their likenesses were reproduced by the thousand in gazettes and almanachs, especially their flat noses and their pointed white ceremonial hats. Beautiful aristocratic ladies gave them a warm welcome. People were surprised that they washed every day and wanted to know how they managed to satisfy the twenty-odd wives each one was supposed to have."

Opposite page, the ambassadors of the King of Siam arrive at the château of Versailles for an audience with the French King, Louis XIV. French engraving of 1687.

MORGAN SPORTÈS
is a French writer who has published a dozen books, including two novels about Thailand, *Siam* (1982) and *Pour la plus grande gloire de Dieu* (1993), both published by Seuil (Paris). He has also written a historical essay, that will be published shortly, on Louis XIV's attempt to seize control of Siam.

Café society

by Rifâ'ah Râfe' el-Tahtâwî

In the nineteenth century a group of Egyptians in Marseilles discover European ways of life. One of them is Rifâ'ah Râfe' el-Tahtâwî (1801-1873), a pioneer of modern Arabic literature. He lived in Europe between 1826 and 1831.

Above, *The Port of Marseilles* (c. 1820) by Ambroise-Louis Garneray.

On the very first day, funny things started to happen at meal time.

First of all they brought us about a hundred chairs to sit on. In this country everybody is amazed when they see people sitting on a carpet or simply on the ground. Then they came back with high tables on which they put white plates. In front of each of us they put a glass, a knife, a fork and a spoon. On each table they put two bottles of water and two containers, one for salt and the other for pepper.

AT TABLE

Then they brought the food on big platters that they placed in ones and twos in the middle of each table. They shared out the food among the people sitting down, with each person receiving one portion. You then had to cut it with a knife and lift little pieces to your mouth with a fork, not your fingers. Here you don't use your fingers, or someone else's fork or knife, and you don't drink from someone else's glass. They claim it's healthier and cleaner that way.

We have also noticed that the French never eat from copper dishes even if they've been tin-plated. They only use them for cooking. At table they use shiny plates, and they eat in stages, beginning with soup, then meat, followed by all kinds of vegetables and pasta. Then they eat salad. Sometimes the plates are the same colour as the food. They are green for salad, for example.

They finish their meal with fruit and wine but don't drink much. Then they take tea or coffee, but that depends on how poor or rich they are. For each new dish they give you a clean new plate.

The first time we walked round the town we saw stores full of mirrors and pretty women. It was midday. The women in this country don't cover their heads, necks, throats, arms or shoulders or even lower down.

So you can imagine what fine sights we saw in shops, cafés and the crowds.

MIRROR IMAGES

The first wonder we beheld was a magnificent café. We went in and found it was organized in an extraordinary fashion. The owner was a lady who sat on a tall chair with an inkwell, feathers and a notebook in front of her. They made the coffee far from the customers, in a back room; the waiters stood between this room and the room where the people were. The main room was filled with chairs covered with velvet and fine wood tables, each with a black or striped top.

This café served all kinds of drinks and cakes. When someone ordered something, the waiters repeated the order to the lady, who ordered them to fetch it and then wrote down the order and its price on a page of her notebook. When a customer wanted to pay, she tore out the page and sent the waiter with it to the customer.

If you ask for a coffee, they bring you the sugar with it. They put the sugar in the cup and stir to mix it with the coffee before they drink. We did the same. Their coffee cups are big. One of theirs is as big as four of our cups in Egypt.

In this café they have all the newspapers, and you can either leaf through them or read them carefully. When I walked in, I thought it was an immense open restaurant full of people, but in fact everyone who comes in and sits down is reflected in all the mirrors, which is why you get the impression that you are in a busy street.

I only really understood that when I saw our images in the reflecting glass of the mirrors. In Egypt mirrors usually deform the reflections. It made me think of certain verses where our poets talk about mirrors and the images they reflect. ■

Extracts from *Takhlîç al-Ibriz Wâ talkhiç Bâriz* ("The purification of gold, or the brief glimpse of Paris").

A Paris café founded in 1832 and still doing business today.

"Cafés in France are not meeting places for criminals. Respectable people go there. They are decorated with magnificent, precious accessories that reflect extreme wealth. They are very expensive. Only the well-off frequent them. The poorer folk go to cabarets to smoke and drink."

Getting to know Chief Iamory

by Louis Gustave Binger

Louis Gustave Binger (1856-1936) was a French officer who explored the Niger bend and the hinterland of Côte d'Ivoire in 1887-1889

Thursday 9 February 1887

In the Sudan, the chiefs' power over their subjects is limitless. Since they are to some extent suspicious of any white traveller, when they have not decided in advance to let him through, they never broach a discussion with him.

Here this was not the case, since Iamory would allow me to see him. But would I get permission from him to continue my journey? He had been described to me as a despotic chief who held merchants to ransom and made them endure all imaginable kinds of vexation.

Iamory is a tall fine-looking man who bears some resemblance to our Wolof contacts. Unfortunately he is slightly disfigured by the tattoos of the Mandé-Dioula, which consist of three long grooves that run from the temples and the ear and spread out at the corners of the mouth.

Captain Binger being received by Iamory (seated at right), as shown in an illustration from the Captain's account of his travels (1892).

When you arrive in a village or come into the presence of a chief of whom you have something to ask, you must take care not to tell him immediately what you want of him. However urgent your mission, you should only talk about it after several interviews.

The first audiences are devoted to greetings and expressions of welcome; then gifts are despatched and other mutual courtesies are exchanged.

On the second or third day, people from the chief's house come and skilfully sound you out. It is a good idea only to unbutton yourself gradually and not to be too precise about your intentions. As he gets to know about your plans, the chief consults his entourage and enquires about public opinion, which it is always advisable to prepare or to win over by cajoling a few powerful figures. Only when he has worked out what he is going to do will he ask to see you. Usually he will only question you as a formality; he will have made his decision beforehand.

But Iamory is a very intelligent man, and there's no point in beating about the bush with him. I explained to him the purpose of my journey. He took a great interest in everything I said, asked for more information about France and our political situation in Europe and assured me that I would be well received wherever I went. ■

Extracts from *Du Niger au golfe de Guinée par le pays de Kong et le Mossi* (1892).

The German botanist and traveller Georg August Schweinfurth (1836-1925) explored the reaches of the upper Nile and was the first European to discover the Uele River in what is now Zaire.

When the Mombuttu[1] women cried hosanna

by Georg Schweinfurth

"Mombuttu Woman" (above) and "Details of the palace of Moonza, king of the Mombuttu" (right). Two illustrations from the French edition of Schweinfurth's *Heart of Africa* (1875).

My relationship with the natives became closer with each passing day. There was always a considerable crowd around my dwelling, avidly watching my slightest gesture. The well-born even had chairs brought for them.

At first these visitors amused me.

I greeted them with welcoming gestures, combing my hair and shaving *in conspectu omnium.*[2]

Moreover the astonishment was mutual. Each instant brought me a new surprise. I spent a good deal of the day sketching and taking notes.

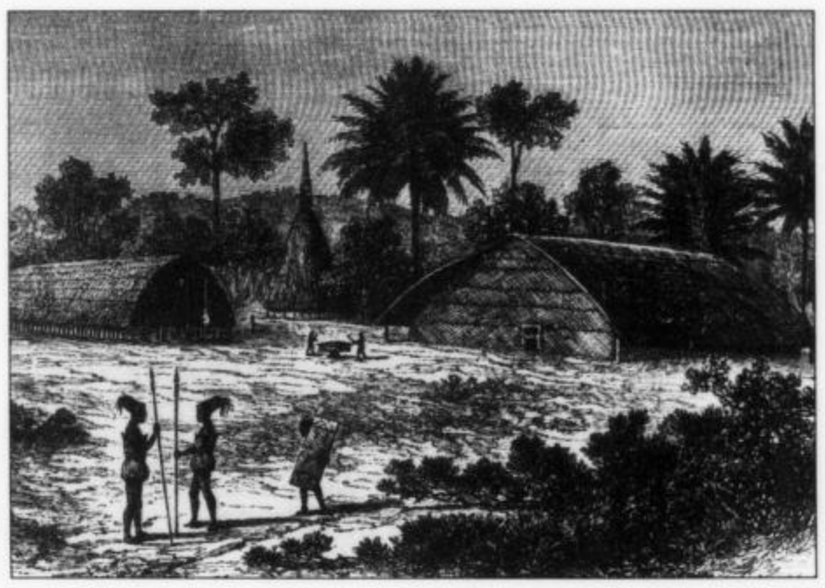
Interesting though they may have been, these visits soon became tiresome. The day after my arrival I had to have a barrier of thorns put up around my tent. But that didn't stop them. I threw water on the nuisances, I exploded powder and fire-crackers. To no effect. My door was guarded by soldiers, but no sooner was I outside it than the crowd gathered round. The women were particularly exasperating. They would follow in my footsteps, preventing me from collecting plants and crushing the few flowers I had taken the trouble to pick. I came to despair. As I walked along streams and through valleys there were a hundred in my wake. With each farm and hamlet the avalanche swelled.

At other times I was in better temper and joked with them. I had learned a few words of their language. When I spoke one of these words, they repeated it happily in chorus like an echo. "Hosanna", one of the words I knew, meant "It isn't". One day, in the midst of a group of women, I shouted it out in a stentorian voice. "Hosanna!" they replied, and for the next quarter of an hour, they repeated the same word with me and continued this strange concert.

These Mombutu women, so cheeky when they are in a group, tend to be shy when they are on their own. I wanted to observe the details of their daily lives, but whenever they saw me coming they would scamper into their dwellings and shut the door in my face. ■

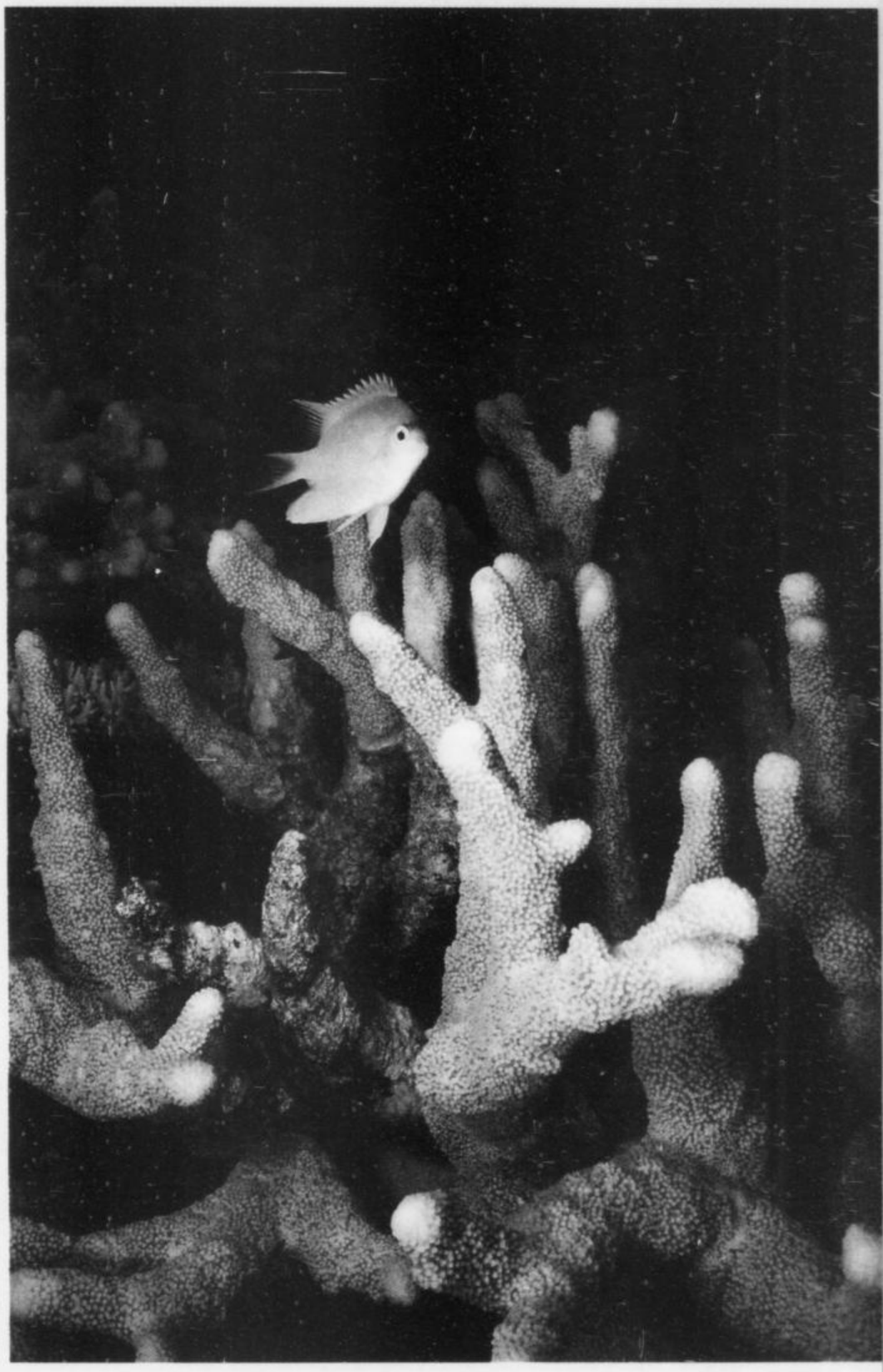
1. Now known as "Mangbetus", one of the peoples of Zaire.
2. In full view of everyone.

Extracts from *Heart of Africa. Three Years' Travels and Adventures in the Unexplored Regions of Central Africa from 1868 to 1871* (1873).



CORAL: TAKING THE PULSE OF THE PLANET

BY FRANCE BEQUETTE



Yellow damsel, Pacific Ocean branching coral (Australia).

CORAL reefs are one of the wonders of the world. And one of its most useful. This is how Professor Jean Jaubert, director of the European Oceanological Observatory *(l'Observatoire Océanologique Européen)* at the Monaco Museum, sees them: "Coral reefs are the marine equivalent of primeval forests and, as home to an exceptionally dense and diversified plant and animal life, help to maintain the major balances of the planet." Roughly 400 million years ago they existed in almost every ocean. Today they form the coastlines of 105 (for the most part developing) countries and reefs extending from the surface down to 30 metres cover some 600,000 km².

They are mostly found in the world's warm and temperate waters, in the Indian Ocean, the Caribbean, Polynesia, Australia, usually on the eastern sides of continents which protect them from the prevailing west winds. There are three main types of coral reef: fringing reefs, near coasts; barrier reefs, separated from the coast by a deep lagoon, the best known example being

CORAL: TAKING THE PULSE OF THE PLANET

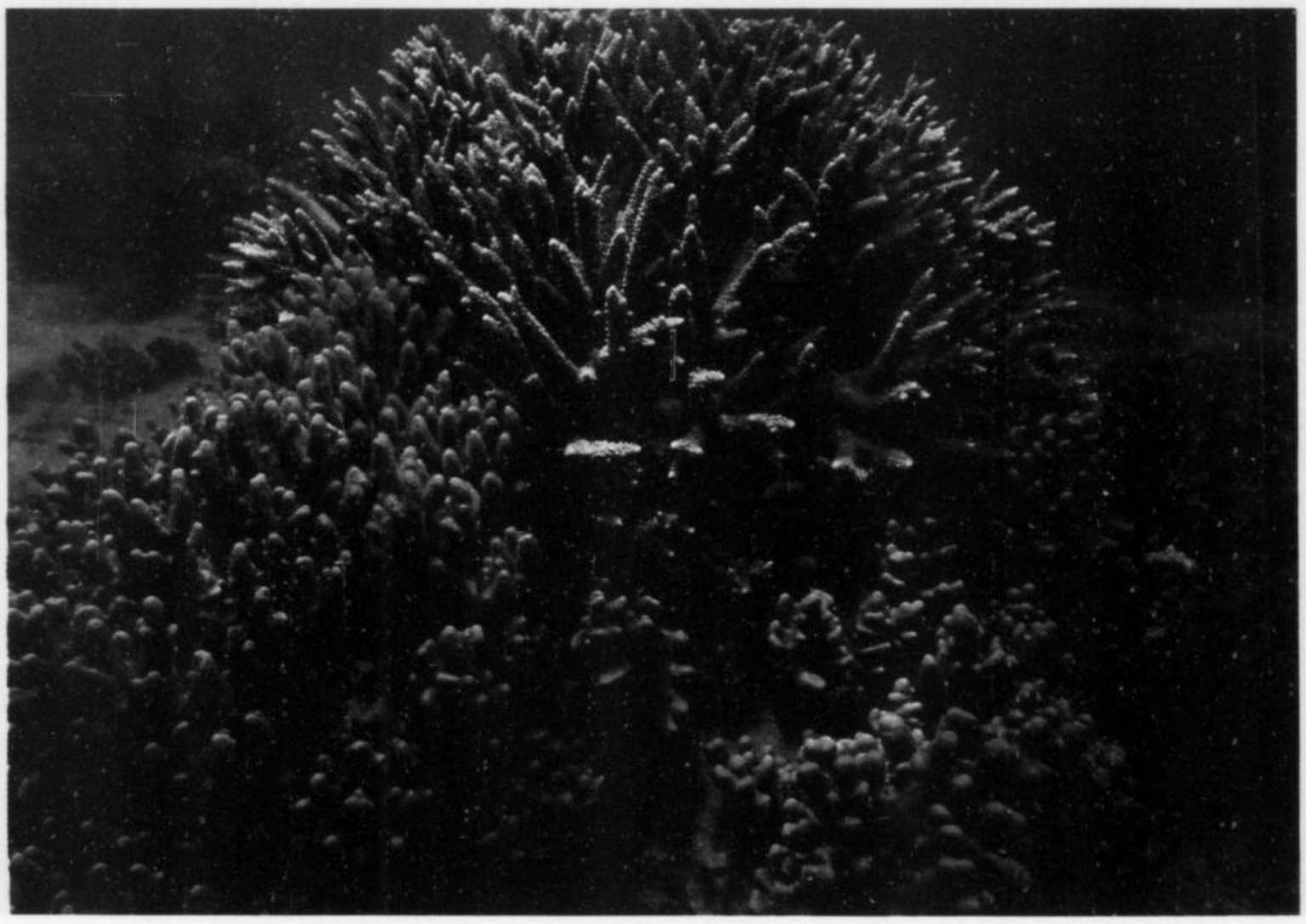
Australia's Great Barrier Reef; and atolls, rings of reefs around lagoons, a typical configuration of many Pacific islands and the kind of thing holidaymakers dream of. As well as being beautiful, coral is also an indicator of marine pollution and variations in global climate. Scientists have noticed that, just as the age of a tree can be read in the concentric circles of a crosscut, coral shows its age in its skeleton and also the traces of any aggression of which it may have been a victim over the years.

ANIMAL, VEGETABLE OR MINERAL?

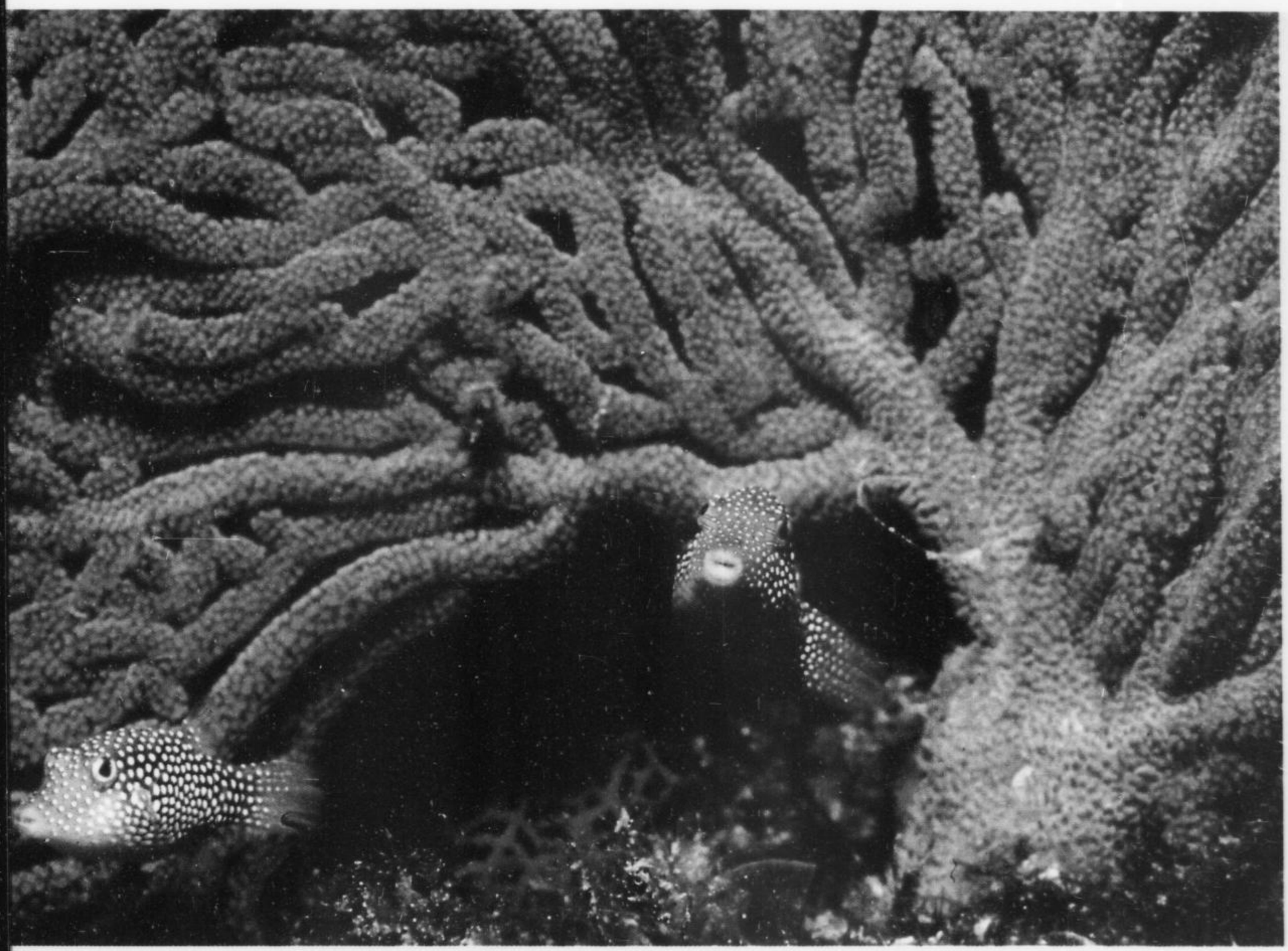
For many years researchers were stumped as to whether coral was animal, vegetable or mineral. The mystery was solved in the mid-eighteenth century by a French surgeon, Jean-André Peysonnel, and an Englishman, John Ellis, who declared coral to be animal! Behind a rock-like appearance conferred by its aragonite skeletons are hidden carnivorous polyps of the coelenterate taxon (in Greek, *coelenteron* means "hollow tube"). There are from 2,500 to 2,600 species (not counting soft corals without skeletons), 700 of which are found in the Indo-Pacific region alone.

Corals are small animals about a centimetre long, consisting of a cylindrical digestive tube with a mouth at one end surrounded by tentacles armed with stinging cells for capturing plankton. During the day these tentacles are folded inside the digestive sac. Like the big carnivores, they only hunt at night, feeding on plankton, small shellfish and larvae. They evacuate calcium carbonate which enables them to produce the outer skeleton within which they shelter. They live symbiotically with microscopic single-celled algae known as zooxanthellae, that lodge in their tissue (up to 7,000 algae per mm^2). The algae process the nitrates, phosphates and carbon dioxide (CO_2) produced in the coral polyp. As a result of photosynthesis, which is only possible as far down as sunlight can penetrate, i.e. some 50 metres, they generate oxygen and organic compounds which the polyps can use. They may also help the polyp lay down calcium carbonate. Thanks to its algae, living coral is rainbow-coloured, yellow, blue, purple, orange, brown or even fluorescent (it should not be confused with red coral, used in jewellery, which is not within the scope of this article). When the symbiotic algae leave it, the coral dies and goes white.

More than a century ago Charles Darwin wondered why the Pacific Ocean is almost a desert although its atolls are luxuriant "oases" where coral and fish abound. In 1974 three oceanographers, Yves Magnier, François Rougerie and Bruno Wauthy, working on behalf of the French Polynesian Fisheries Service under the aegis of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB), studied the physical-chemical balance of the Takapoto atoll lagoon in the Tuamotu Islands. The food that sustained life in the lagoon clearly came from deep water. But how, since the deep water is cold and does not mix with the warm surface water? The three researchers made the brilliant discovery that the atoll works like an oil lamp. The water warms up as it occupies the reef's porous base (the wick), causing nutrient salts (the fuel) to rise with the warmer water towards the surface where they are consumed (the flame). The phenomenon was given the name geothermal endo-upwelling and is now gaining ground in the scientific community.



Acropora coral (New Caledonia).



Gorgonia and snapnose puffer (Baja California, Mexico).

If they are well fed, the polyps reproduce in two ways. In a single night shortly after the full moon, the polyps (which are both male and female) spew out a cloud of spermatozoa and ova that unite and give birth to thousands of small larvae, planula, which, if they are lucky enough to escape their predators, attach themselves to rocks. When the polyp is firmly ensconced, it can also reproduce asexually by simply splitting. If it is to prosper, the polyp must not be subjected to stress. What it likes is warmth, between 25 and 29°C, but in the Gulf it may support variations between 14 and 35°C. It needs clear, salty, highly oxygenated sunlit water. It detests sand clouds that suffocate it, pesticides and fertilizers leached by rain through deforestation, oil, parrotfish that nibble its tips and, above all, human beings who walk on it and break off its branches for souvenirs.

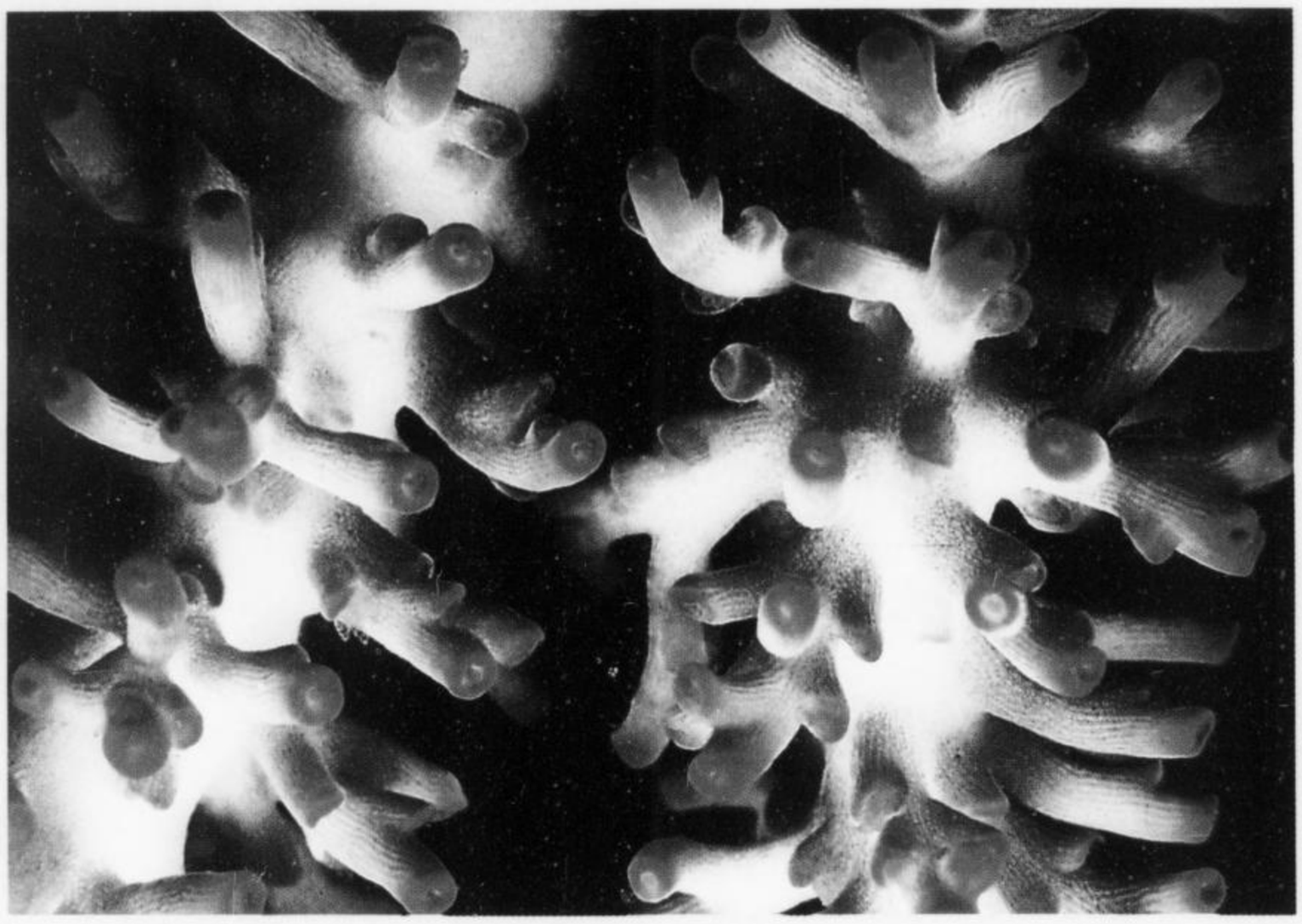
Although tourism provides income, the care that the Australians take of the 2,300 kilometres and the 400,000 km² of the Great Barrier Reef should be emulated, i.e. divers and pleasure boats should be strictly monitored. But for poor countries this is easier said than done.

STRIKING REGENERATIVE POWERS

However, some optimistic news has reached us from UNESCO's Regional Office in Jakarta, where Robin Harger, a coral specialist, notes the striking regenerative powers of coral reefs. He challenges the accuracy of a map—but only the map—that has appeared in a booklet entitled *Reefs at Risk* (see further reading below). In an area of eastern Indonesia where the map indicates reefs with a life-expectancy of 10-20 years, he notes 80%-90% coral cover in a reef in Banda Island that had been badly damaged by lava flows. He describes the reef in question as "absolutely spectacular" with "humphead parrotfish half the size of a Volkswagen Beetle". His many dives around the world enable him to judge that this ecosystem is in good health. To say that the reefs are in a critical condition is to strike a blow at eco-tourism, "which is considered as a potential element of economic salvation."

Coral reefs deserve respect because they protect coasts and mangroves from battering by waves and provide a home for countless fish and shellfish species. And yet for centuries in islands like the Maldives it was traditional practice, now prohibited, to extract blocks of coral for building temples and monasteries, so that the fish virtually disappeared. In the Philippines fishing with dynamite, although officially

CORAL: TAKING THE PULSE OF THE PLANET



Acropora coral from the Indo-Pacific region.

banned, is still practised, and more generally, the often-criticized capture of exotic fish and the removal of living coral for European and North American aquariums are only marginal activities.

HEAT WAVE

Another, more serious, threat to coral is posed by the earth's changing climate. Some scientists claim that by the middle of next century the amount of CO_2 in the earth's atmosphere will have doubled, there will be a general rise in temperature, and climatic variation will be greater than it has been in the past 6,000 years. What effects would this have on coral reefs and the creatures that depend on them for their survival?

A Global Task Team of experts sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the Association of the South Pacific Environmental Institutions (ASPEI), in collaboration with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN), asserts that people represent the greatest threat to coral reefs. Because of the constantly increasing emissions of greenhouse gases and gases that destroy the ozone layer, we can expect: a rise in air and sea-surface temperatures; changes in weather patterns; more frequent storms, droughts and floods; possible alterations in ocean currents and in the chemical composition of sea water due to higher concentrations of CO_2. The hole in the ozone layer again comes into it: coral larvae have a very low tolerance to ultra-violet rays. Freshwater run-off, loaded with dissolved nutrients, promotes the development of phytoplankton, the favourite food of the larvae of Acanthaster, an enormous starfish measuring 60 centimetres in diameter that can devastate coral reefs. It extracts its stomach from its body and attaches it to the rock, devouring and digesting all the coral's living matter.

One of the most controversial human activities in the Pacific region is French nuclear testing on the Mururoa Atoll. Yet some scientists are happy about this because when testing takes place vertical soundings to a depth of 1,200 metres and oblique soundings towards the ocean have made it possible to study the terrain of volcanic origin that constitutes the base and sides of the atoll. Subsidence after the explosions has also enabled scientists to study the impact of the rise in sea-level on this kind of island.

WHITE DEATH

In April 1991 and again recently Polynesian fishermen and divers observed a strange phenomenon that intrigues researchers. The reefs seemed to "flower" in gorgeous, fluorescent colours or else to become totally white. The eight high islands

in the Society archipelago were affected. Was the coral being decimated by the few degrees' rise in the global temperature? According to the findings of three tropical oceanographers, Francis Rougerie, Bernard Salvat and Miri Tatarata-Couraud, "bleaching" seems to be the result of a combination of factors: "a heat wave in the tropical ocean combined with an accentuation of the greenhouse effect, an overdose of ultra-violet rays connected with the reduction of the ozone layer, a shortage of nutrient salts, disease or oxygen intoxication". They conclude that "Whatever the real cause, the threat to the algae-coral ecosystem is serious and could be linked to human activities. Are we witnessing a veritable eco-genocide?" Fortunately, according to Professor Jean Jaubert, the phenomenon is not irreversible and under certain conditions the symbiotic algae return to the coral, and they start life over again together.

The increase in CO_2 for which we are directly responsible now exceeds the absorbent capacity of the plant-life that feeds on it, especially since we continue to destroy forests. Yet it is probable that even if the world were completely replanted there would not be enough vegetation to absorb the 751 gigatons of CO_2 present in the atmosphere. Can coral reefs help us to get rid of it? "Although they consume CO_2 to make their skeletons," Jean Jaubert remarks, "they actually release more than they absorb, i.e. about 2 per cent of the CO_2 released by human beings, but that is a normal figure for the interglacial period we are living in."

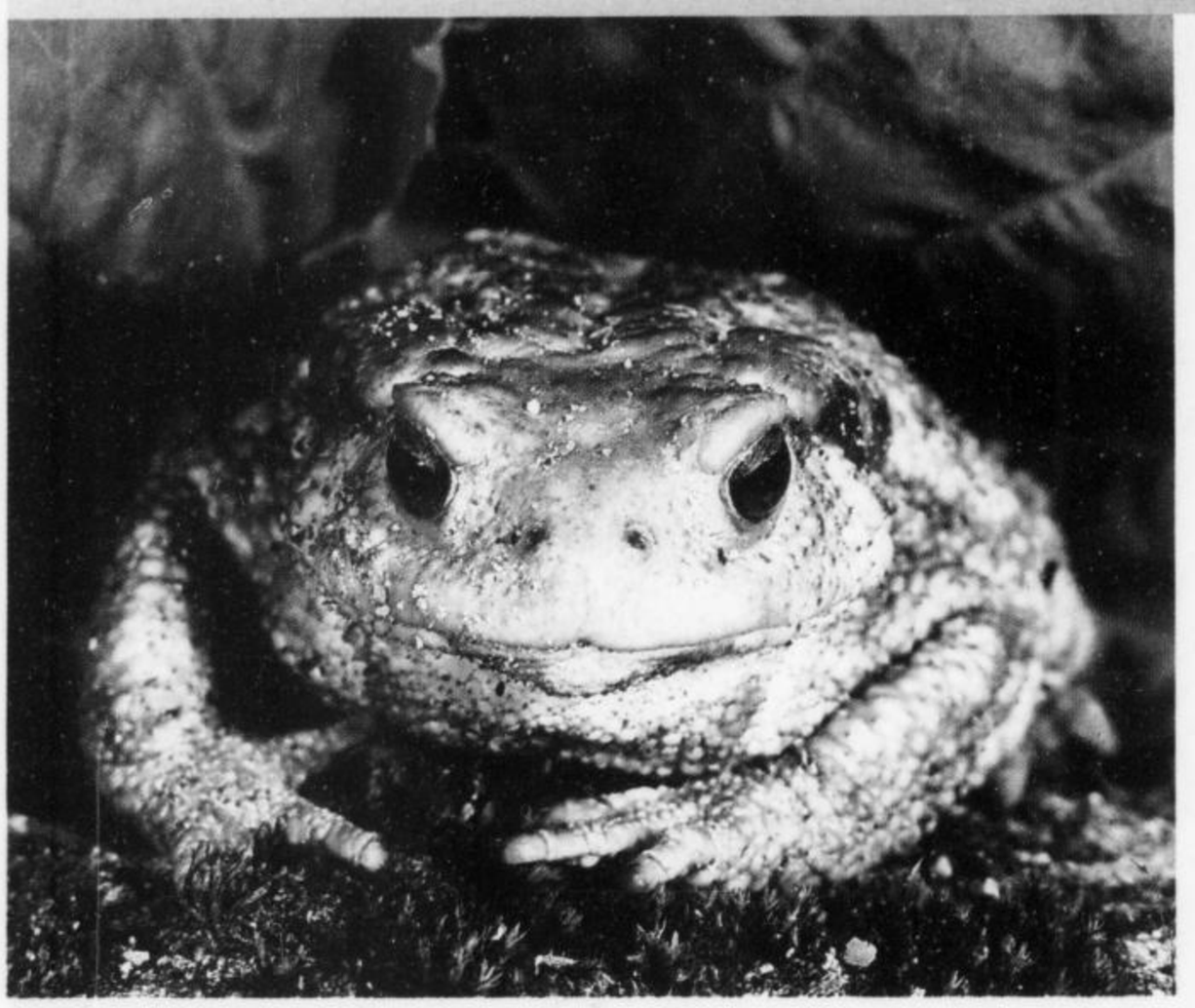
Even if they do not get rid of CO_2 for us, corals deserve our fullest attention. They are food-stores, assuring the survival of all those who live by fishing on the many islands surrounded by reefs. The Monaco Scientific Centre is at present the only place where coral is grown in laboratory conditions. Their oldest specimen is 16 years old. "We take cuttings from it, and they become our laboratory mice for experimentation. So we don't have to take samples from reefs. We have a kind of nursery of seedlings ready to help restore reefs that are in bad shape!" ■

Gorgonia (Australia).

FURTHER READING:

- *Coral Reef Management Handbook*, R. A. Kenchington and Brydget E. T. Hudson, UNESCO, 1988.
- *Les coraux*, B. Robin, C. Petron and C. Rives, Les Editions du Pacifique, 1988.
- *Coral Reefs*, UNESCO, 1990.
- *Reefs at Risk*, published by UNEP, IOC, WMO, WWF and IUCN, 1993.
- *Monitoring Coral Reefs for Global Change*, IUCN. 1993.

FRANCE BEQUETTE
is a Franco-American journalist specializing in environmental questions. Since 1985 she has been associated with the WANAD-UNESCO training programme for African news agency journalists.

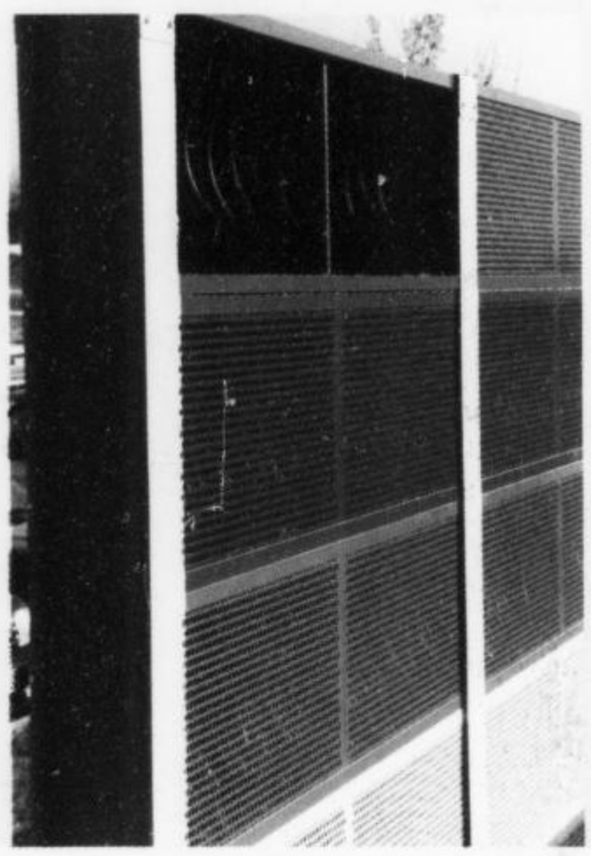


IF TOADS HAD FEATHERS. . .

This is no joke, but a thought inspired by a serious study published by the US National Academy of Sciences and sponsored by the National Science Foundation, the Forestry Service and the National Geographic Society. The frog and toad population of every continent is dwindling because these hairless, featherless creatures with gelatinous, shell-less eggs are sensitive to ultraviolet B rays that attack their DNA. The intensity of these rays is increasing with the depletion of the ozone layer. ■

KILLER HOUSES

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) says that 20,000 lung cancer deaths a year are caused by the polluted air breathed in homes, offices and factories. Certain pollutants such as radon, a colourless and odourless radioactive gas, tobacco smoke and asbestos, are well known. Others, such as dust, mould and mildew in air ducts, fumes from cleaning solvents, furniture polish and carpet shampoos, are less so. In most industrialized countries attempts to cut energy costs have reduced ventilation rates in buildings, increasingly exposing their inhabitants to noxious products. A bill approved by the U.S. Senate would give the EPA the power to develop safe levels for a range of pollutants. Before being enacted into law it must be approved by the House of Representatives and signed by the President. ■



ANTI-NOISE TYRES

Used tyres cause pollution when they are burned because they emit a dangerous gas with a high sulphur dioxide content. Dumps are few and far between and cost money. Now a French company* has come up with the bright idea of using them to make anti-noise screens. The tyres are cut in two along the diameter, then pressed together and stacked in a fire-resistant metal container with a perforated cover on the side facing the road. They absorb 85 per cent of noise frequencies between 250 and 2,000 Hertz, a real feat since heavy road traffic emits between 250 and 700 Hertz. The tyres are rot-proof and act as shock-absorbers in the case of accidents. About 10 million tyres would be needed to equip 200 km of motorway, but it appears to be an excellent way of recycling this cumbersome form of waste—France alone produces more than 20 million used tyres a year.

***Groupe ACIAL, Division Acoustique, 62, rue Amelot, 75011 Paris, Tel.: (33-1) 4492-1818, Fax: (33-1) 4338-7010.** ■

MOROCCO'S FUELWOOD CRISIS

In southern Morocco, on the edge of the Sahara Desert, the gradual disappearance of forests is forcing villagers in search of fuel to burn scrub and even leaves. In order to light a small fire, not even hot enough to cook meat, women spend 6 hours a day gathering from 30 to 35 kg of this fuel. The soil is not regenerating, posing a threat to the survival of plant-life. The meagre herds of cattle and sheep are being forced to migrate in order to survive. Gérard Buttoud of the French National Institute for Agronomical Research (INRA) suggests cultivating oasis trees, with emphasis on fruit trees and acacias for fodder, associating perennial plants with annuals, and promoting the biological regeneration of the environment. ■

WILL CHILDREN SAVE THE BALTIC?

According to the ecological organization Greenpeace, the Baltic Sea is becoming more and more polluted. Its lifeless waters contain all kinds of organic and chemical wastes. Bordering countries, which are counting on industrial development as a motor for economic growth, are not ready to jeopardize growth for the sake of ecology. With the aid of the University of Riga in Latvia, Greenpeace has thus launched an operation urging all the children who live on the Baltic rim to write to their governments asking them to save the sea. ■

PREVENTIVE MEDICINE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

New European regulations oblige industry to reassess 100,000 chemical substances. This represents an enormous market for ecotoxicology, the environment's "preventive medicine" department. At a rate of 300 substances per year, it will take no less than 300 years to complete the job! The European Union's directive 92/32 stipulates that before being marketed all new chemical substances must be reported to a competent authority in a member State, which must also be given a dossier evaluating their potential risks to health and the environment. ■

WASTE-EATING ALGAE

Stephen Skill, of the London-based company Biotechna, has developed the "biocoil", a machine that uses algae to clean up sewage. In a 5-metre-high coil of polyvinyl chloride tubes, chlorella algae absorb nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphate from the effluent and transform them into protein. When it is working at full capacity the biocoil will detoxify 20 cubic metres of sewage per hour. The well-fed algae can be dried out and used as animal feed. ■

INITIATIVES

JAPAN: NEW APPROACHES TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Fujiyama, a dormant volcano whose snow-capped cone is perfectly symmetrical.

JAPAN is an archipelago of more than 3,900 islands stretching over 3,000 kms. to the east of the Asian continent It is a largely mountainous country, two-thirds of which is covered with forests. Most of the 124 million Japanese live on the coastal plains, and the average population density of 330 persons per square kilometre explains many of the country's environmental problems. The annual per capita income of $27,000 indicates the degree of economic development, based on use of ultra-modern technology and on a high standard of education. The environment has suffered as a result of economic growth and high levels of mass consumption. Awareness of growing problems appeared in the 1960s, and since then two novel initiatives have been taken.

THE POLLUTER PAYS

After the Second World War the numbers of city-dwellers rose to 77 per cent of the population. Tokyo became a city of 20 million people. Many industrial complexes were built along the coasts, without much regard for the environment. Irreversible harm was inflicted on nature, and serious health damage from water and air pollution occurred, such as methyl-mercury poisoning (Minamata disease), cadmium poisoning (Itai-Itai disease) and chronic arsenic poisoning.

There was a public outcry against these tragedies, and in 1971 the Japanese government established an Environment Agency to halt the spread of pollution. Action was taken on several fronts: against air, water and soil pollution, noise, vibration, ground subsidence and offensive odours.

A GREEN CENSUS

A new principle of joint liability was introduced to make polluters pay. By March 1993, the company responsible for the Minamata disaster had compensated 2,255 sufferers from the disease, and over 2,300 claims for compensation remained to be settled. In 1993 more than 88,000 people certified as air-pollution victims (e.g. asthmatics) received compensation.

To monitor the state of its natural environment Japan has enlisted the aid of thousands of experts in natural history, over 100,000 volunteers and a number of non-governmental organizations to carry out a comprehensive and periodically updated nationwide survey known as the "Green Census". The first survey was effected between 1973 and 1979. The fifth has just begun. Vegetation maps on a scale of 1:50,000 have already appeared, as well as hundreds of volumes on animal life, rivers, lakes and many other natural elements. After studying threatened plant and animal species, the Environment Agency also published a "Red Data Book of Animals in Japan", while the Nature Conservation Society of Japan has produced a "Red Data Book of Plants in Japan". Many species are under threat from pollution, the destruction of their habitats and excessive hunting. The country's 28 national parks have only one ranger per 17,500 hectares and are not, strictly speaking, reserves. In some zones within the parks there are even golf courses, spas and ski resorts.

Each year since 1968, Japan has published a report entitled "Quality of the Environment in Japan", in Japanese and English. It is drawn up after consultation with the Environment Agency and other relevant institutions and ministries. According to the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), it should be seen as a model for most other OECD members. ■

FURTHER READING:

OECD Environmental Performance Reviews. Japan. OECD, 2 rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France. 1994 (also in French).
The Environment Agency, 122 Kasunigaseseki Tokyo 100,
Fax: (81-3) 3504-1634.

UNESCO IN action

Gold masterworks from the Andes

The finest specimens of pre-Columbian jewellery ever seen in Europe

"They bartered everything they had for a few glass beads and baubles. I watched carefully and tried to find out if there was any gold. Some of them wore jewels. I used sign language to question them and learned that by going south and sailing around the island one could reach a kingdom. Its king possessed large gold jars, great quantities of them," wrote Christopher Columbus on 13 October 1492, the day after his discovery of America. Five centuries later, a fabulous exhibition of pre-Columbian gold is being held in Metz in eastern France, on the initiative of the Council of the Moselle department and within the framework of UNESCO's World Decade for Cultural Development. More than 600 pre-Columbian pieces of gold-work from Peru, Colombia and Ecuador are being shown. The finest specimens of their kind ever seen in a European exhibition, they include the ceremonial gold jewellery of great Meso-American priests and princes, and sacrificial knives and masks, most of which have never left their countries, where they are held as part of central bank gold reserves.

The exhibition, entitled "L'Or des Dieux, l'Or des Andes", is being held at the Arsenal in Metz until 2 October 1994. It provides an exceptional opportunity to find out about Amerindian civilizations that were victims of the greed their riches inspired and remained largely unknown until their history was reconstructed from vestiges unearthed by archaeologists. In Europe their treasures sent back to the Spanish monarchs by the conquistadors disappeared because they were prized only for their weight in gold.

The exhibition is divided into three parts, one for each donor country. The first is devoted to ancient Peru, where gold and metalworking originated in the Americas and where, before the Incas, the Mochica (100 B.C. to 600 A.D.) and the Chimu (11th to 15th centuries A.D.) cultures held sway. Archaeologists have recently unearthed the extraordinary intact Mochica tomb of the lord of Sipan, dating from the 2nd or 3rd centuries. The tomb has been reconstituted not far from the Arsenal in the church of Saint-Pierre-aux-Nonnains, a Roman basilica that proudly claims to be the oldest church in France, where the Mochica prince lies as if in his tomb, arrayed in gold and surrounded by copies of the precious objects that accompanied him to the next world.

From Colombia, the El Dorado of the conquistadors, 151 objects in gold and *tumbaga* (a copper and gold alloy) are on show. They have been lent by the Gold Museum of the central bank in Bogota, whose collections are representative of all the pre-Hispanic cultures. Ecuador has sent some extremely rare gold and platinum alloy pieces. They date from the beginning of the Christian era and display a level of craftsmanship that European goldsmiths would only attain centuries later.

The exhibition also includes a section that traces the history of gold from neolithic times to its use in space technology.

■ Information and reservation by phone at (33-1) 44 10 73 03 or by the French electronic directory (Minitel) 3615-Billetel or 3615 FNAC.

newsbriefs...

SOUTH AFRICA INVITED TO RETURN TO UNESCO

After the first democratically held elections in its history South Africa has been invited to rejoin UNESCO, which it left in 1956. During the election, UNESCO supported several non-governmental organizations involved in civic education activities, backing, for example, an audiovisual voter education programme intended for illiterate and semi-literate citizens that provided information in English, Zulu, Sotho and Afrikaans. UNESCO also supported existing organizations to guarantee press freedom during the election, notably by working with the International Press Institute in a commission set up to deal with media complaints. A Memorandum of Co-operation is being worked out with the new South African government. Priority will be given to a reform of the educational system in order to create a base for equitable development and contribute to the building of a democratic, non-racial society free from apartheid.

COSMOPOLITAN CITIES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

Granada, Istanbul, Alexandria, Tunis, Beirut and Sarajevo are just a few of the cities around the Mediterranean that have absorbed many different influences and developed a way of life that blends conviviality with tolerance. At a time when some of them are the tragic victims of violence and destruction it is worth remembering that in their past they have often provided a setting for intelligent coexistence.

The quarterly review *Confluences Méditerranée* has devoted a special dossier to this theme, prepared by Anissa Barrak. Its contents include the proceedings of a symposium on the Tunisian Jewish community organized in May 1993 by the Tunisian delegation to UNESCO. The first institutionalized encounter between the Jewish and non-Jewish communities since the country's independence, the symposium was attended by Jewish and Muslim Tunisian

intellectuals and artists, including writer Albert Memmi, historian Lucette Valensi and film-maker Férid Boughédir.
■ *Confluences Méditerranée*, No. 10, Spring 1994, 90 French francs.
77, rue Blomet, 75015 Paris, France,
Tel: (33-1) 48 42 47 44.

A RADIO SERIAL FOR AFGHAN WOMEN

Later this year, Afghan women will be able to listen to a radio serial that will provide first class entertainment while informing them about health, nutrition and farming. Produced by the BBC World Service in co-operation with UNESCO, UNICEF and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the serial is scheduled to be broadcast in two 15-minute episodes weekly in two Afghan languages, Pashto and Dari. The main objective is to educate a mass audience of women, who are often hard to reach through conventional development projects, about issues necessary to improve their lives.

AN ATLAS OF BAROQUE ART

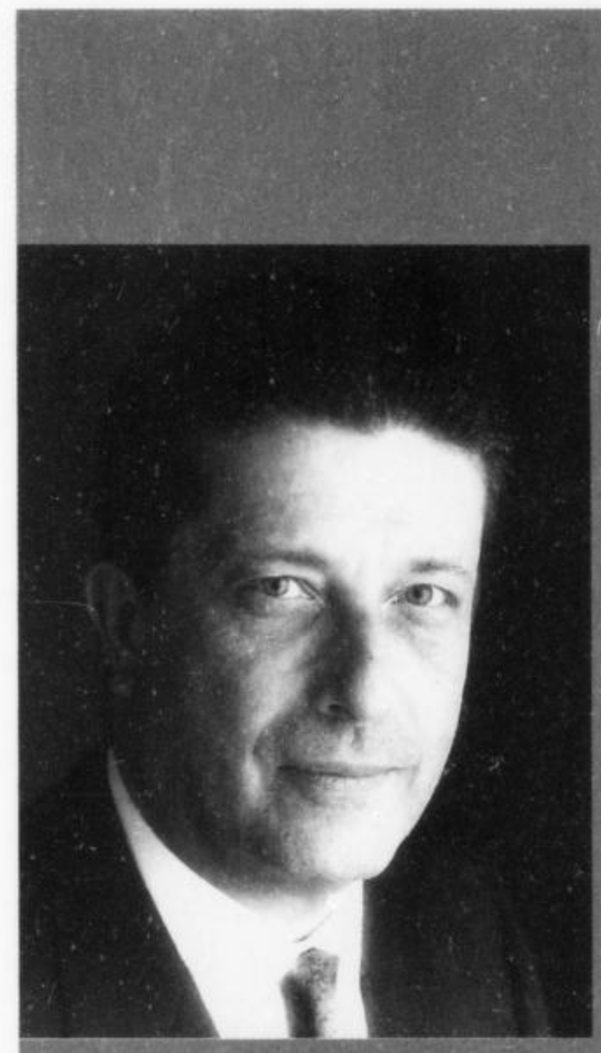
Twenty European and Latin American experts on Baroque art met in Havana (Cuba) in March for a first inter-regional seminar devoted to the preparation of a 5-volume international *Atlas of Baroque Art*. Part of UNESCO's "Baroque World Project", the atlas will present the art and culture of the 17th and 18th centuries in 40 countries, not only in Europe and Latin America but also in Asia.

INNOV, A DATA BANK ON BASIC EDUCATION

Some 80 innovative basic education projects in developing countries feature on INNOV, a new database created as part of "Education for All, Making it Work," UNESCO's major international project to collect, analyse and promote such innovations. INNOV is intended for grassroots project managers, teacher training institutes, researchers and planning personnel in ministries of education. It appears in English and will be regularly updated. For further information please contact the Division of Basic Education/CBE,
UNESCO, 7, Place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07, France,
Tel: (33 1) 4568-2364/2126,
Fax: (33-1) 4065-9406.

INTERNATIONAL ILLUSTRATION COMPETITION FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

The winners of the Noma Concours for Picture Book Illustrations will be announced in December 1994 by an international jury convened by the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) in Tokyo. The Concours, a biennial competition launched in 1978 thanks to a donation made by Mr. Shoishi Noma, former vice-president of the Centre, is intended to encourage children's book illustrators in developing countries. It is open to nationals of UNESCO Member States in Asia and the Pacific, Africa, the Arab world, Latin America and the Caribbean. The winner of the Grand Prix will receive a medal, a cheque for US$3,000 and an invitation to attend the award ceremony in Tokyo. The closing date for entries is 15 November 1994.
Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU),
6 Fukuromachi, Shinjuku-ku,
Tokyo 162 Japan,
Tel: (81-3) 3269-4445/4435,
Fax: (81 3) 3269-4510.



THIS ARTICLE IS ONE OF A SERIES IN WHICH THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO SETS OUT HIS THINKING ON MATTERS OF CURRENT CONCERN

COMMENTARY BY FEDERICO MAYOR

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE

THE World Summit for Social Development that will be held in Copenhagen early next year will be an opportunity for the international community to search for a new approach to a very wide range of questions of fundamental importance to all of us. These questions include the nature of work and the concept of "active life" (including leisure), mechanisms for the transfer of knowledge, systems for providing assistance to developing countries, trade relationships, the form of higher education, and many others.

Development efforts in the past have given priority to economic growth, but they have been unable to prevent widespread poverty and provide full employment. Among their consequences have been the marginalization and exclusion of large sections of the population, the acceleration of the rural exodus, the deterioration of the urban habitat, the ghettoization of the suburbs and the degradation of the natural environment. Meanwhile, structural adjustment policies have severely affected social sectors such as education and health and in some countries have even compromised the prospects for economic recovery. A world-wide "social adjustment" must now be achieved.

Economic growth should serve the cause of social development and respect the environment. Machines should replace people only to do work that cannot really be done efficiently by men and women. Otherwise, there will be a huge social price to be paid in terms of unemployment, extremism and violence.

I believe that action to promote social development should be taken on six major fronts:

1. Endogenous capacity building in each country.

☛ Education and training should be given the highest priority and investment in education should be increased so that socially distant and geographically remote populations can have access to knowledge. Intensive training courses should be permanently available without regard to age or level of previous studies.

☛ Education and empowerment of girls and women are key factors in curbing population growth, promoting gender equity and in developing the full potential of women.

☛ A new role for higher education should be found in all countries, incorporating lifelong higher-learning facilities.

☛ Continuing efforts should be made to promote the transfer and sharing of knowledge, particular in science and technology.

☛ Development should be based on the will of each society and should express its fundamental identity. Cultural factors should be an integral part of all strategies designed to achieve balanced development.

2. Promoting the development of rural areas. The problem of emigration from rural areas should be tackled at its roots, particularly through education, through promoting craftsmanship and cultural tourism, encouraging the development of indigenous cultures, ensuring that everyone has access to shelter, and decentralizing education and social services at municipal level.

3. Combatting marginalization and exclusion and promoting participation in community life. This is a key indicator of social development—respect for human rights and the forming of democratic attitudes must be promoted from early childhood. Tolerance and non-violence should be encouraged by all possible means, as should intercultural dialogue and press freedom.

4. Protecting and safeguarding the environment. As a follow-up to Agenda 21, the action plan adopted at the Rio Summit in 1992, efforts should be redoubled to promote environmental awareness. One extremely important goal is to reduce the impact of natural hazards (especially recurrent ones). Research and training on the relationship between Man and Nature in different parts of the world should be carried out in an interdisciplinary framework.

5. Improving communication. To foster awareness and to promote social integration, communication must be improved world-wide through the use of new communication and information technologies. Countries should draw up overall information policies in these fields.

6. Establishing "observatories" and "early warning systems" that will be able to detect potential social conflicts and unrest and will be of great importance for monitoring implementation of the work of the World Summit. UNESCO has recently launched a programme called MOST (Management of Social Transformations) to respond to the growing demand from developing countries and countries-in-transition for assistance in building their capacities in social sciences and in monitoring social change and transition.

We must indeed be vigilant to all aspects of social change and seek imaginative ways of dealing with any threats that may be posed. I am thinking, for example, of opportunities to promote "eco-jobs" in the field of environmental protection concerning water supply and quality, industrial gases, the use of fertilizers and other artificial compounds, as well as the development of small-scale rural food transformation industries, cultural tourism, the protection of handicrafts and cultural property.

Development must have a human face. Sustainable social development is only possible by way of improvements in the quality of life: better education, better health, respect for human rights, democracy, the rational use of resources through the application of advances in science and technology, and a commitment to the culture of peace and international solidarity. ■

testimony

The rescue of the Bulgarian Jews in 1943

by Emmanuel Vaillant

On 8 March 1994, a ceremony was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris under the patronage of M. François Mitterrand, President of France, to commemorate the saving of the Bulgarian Jews during the Second World War. The Bulgarians were one of the few peoples in Europe to protect their Jewish community, even though their country was allied to Nazi Germany. The following article draws largely on the testimony of Louis Blum, who lived through these events and, like 47,000 of his fellow citizens, escaped deportation to the death camps. Forty years later history honours the memory of thousands of Bulgarians who rejected intolerance. It also records the shameful story of the 11,363 Jews from Thrace and Macedonia who were sacrificed because they did not possess Bulgarian nationality.

Bulgaria, ruled by King Boris III, had a population of six million in 1939. The regime had fascist leanings, but a number of opposition political parties were tolerated. The people were mostly Orthodox, and the Jewish community was well integrated.

When war broke out, Bulgaria leaned towards the cause of Nazi Germany, on which it was economically dependent. The government soon drafted an anti-Semitic law, "for the protection of the nation". A year later the law was adopted in the teeth of fierce opposition from many Bulgarian members of parliament and writers.

On 1 March 1941, the country officially became an ally of the Third Reich and was later permitted to administer Thrace and Macedonia. At that time 12,000 Jews, considered to be stateless persons, were living in Bulgaria's two "new territories".

In August 1942 a Commission for Jewish Questions was set up under the anti-Semitic ideologist, Alexander Belev. In the same month a decree expelling Sofia's Jews to the provinces was promulgated.

"We were given six months to leave the capital," Louis Blum remembers. "Those who did not leave voluntarily faced deportation to a city arbitrarily assigned to them by the authorities. Most of Sofia's Jews preferred to stay, hoping that things would sort themselves out. At the end of May 1943, however, they were all forced to leave.

"My family chose to leave Sofia in November 1942. We settled in Pazardjil, near Plovdiv, Bulgaria's second largest city. There were about a thousand of us Jews in a district of some 30,000 inhabitants. A few months after our arrival, alarming rumours began to go round. There was talk about trains carrying Jews from Greece and Thrace to Poland in cattle wagons. On 9 March 1943, the police arrested our community leaders and their families.

"About thirty people were interned in the Pazardjil Jewish school, which was in the grounds of the synagogue. No one was allowed to visit them, although a crowd of their Jewish and non-Jewish friends gathered nearby. Protests spread like wildfire. Efforts were made to influence the authorities. We discovered that the detainees were to join the trainloads of deported Greek Jews and that other arrests were imminent. Schoolmates immediately offered to let me stay the night at their homes, just in case.

"The next day all the Jews who had been arrested were released. The decree for their deportation to Poland had been rescinded. After their release, there was a big demonstration at which people cried 'Long live Bulgaria, homeland of all its children'. It was not until later that we learned what had really happened."

An indelible stain

On 22 February SS Sturmführer Theodor Dannecker, a close colleague of Adolf Eichmann, met Alexander Belev in Sofia where

the two men drew up a plan to deport 20,000 Jews to Germany. The first target was the Jewish community in the territories of Thrace and Greece ceded to Bulgaria by Nazi Germany. At the beginning of March, with the consent of Boris III and his government, 11,363 "non-Bulgarian" Jews were arrested. Packed into freight trains, they crossed Bulgaria on their way to Treblinka, from which they never returned.

The agreement signed by the Nazis provided for the deportation of 20,000 Jews. More than 8,000 still had to be found. The Commission for Jewish Questions drew up a list of 8,400 names. The deportations were scheduled for 9 March. The day before, an official of the town of Kiustendil discovered dozens of freight wagons standing near the local station, ready to transport Jews to Poland. He told one of his friends, who was close to the deputy speaker of the Bulgarian parliament, Dimiter Pechev. Deeply distressed by this piece of information, Pechev raised the matter in parliament on the same day. Before being dismissed from his post, he had time to collect the signatures of forty-three leading opposition figures. Elin Pelin, president of the Bulgarian Writers' Association and a friend of the King, wrote that "The conscience of the Bulgarian people hangs in the balance. The stain cast on our people by the expulsion of our Jewish fellow-citizens will not be erased for generations to come."

Resistance began to take shape. Associations of doctors, shop-keepers, lawyers, university professors and the highest officials of the Orthodox Church called for the annulment of the expulsion decree. In Plovdiv, Patriarch Cyril told the Jewish community, "Wherever you go, I shall go too." The Red Cross and foreign Jewish leaders also brought pressure to bear, as did the Allies, who announced an offensive on the Russian front. In a report commenting on the reaction of the Bulgarian people, the ambassador of Nazi Germany wrote: "The Bulgarian efforts to save their Jews are due to the mentality of this people which lacks our clearmindedness and our ideological vision. Raised with Armenians, Greeks and Gypsies, the Bulgarians have no trouble living with Jews, so that in their eyes nothing justifies the measures we are taking regarding them." On 10 March, after a big demonstration in the streets of Sofia, Boris III withdrew the expulsion decree and the Bulgarian Jews arrested in the provinces were freed.

"The Commission for Jewish Questions drew up a list of 8,400 names. The deportations were scheduled for 9 March. The day before, an official of the town of Kiustendil discovered dozens of freight wagons standing near to the local station, ready to transport Jews to Poland. He told one of his friends, who was close to the deputy speaker of the Bulgarian parliament."

"The next day, all the Jews who had been arrested were released. The decree for their deportation to Poland had been rescinded. After their release, there was a big demonstration at which people cried 'Long live Bulgaria, homeland of all its children.' It was not until later that we learned what had really happened."

A prayer for peace

However, the repeal of this decree was not followed by the abrogation of the anti-Jewish laws. In May and June 1943, almost 20,000 Sofia Jews were deported to provincial cities. During the same period, 7,000 Jews were sent to forced labour camps.

"After the events of March 1943," continues Louis Blum, "my father decided to send my brother and me to Palestine. It was hard enough to get a Bulgarian passport, but getting a British visa for Palestine was even more difficult. Meanwhile, I passed my school certificate in June 1943. I was immediately put into a Jewish group and sent to a work camp. Conditions were very hard, but no one died of mistreatment, exhaustion or hunger."

Before the end of the war Louis Blum, his brother and 2,000 other Jews managed to obtain a British visa enabling them to go to Palestine. In 1948 and 1949 35,000 more Bulgarian Jews followed them. Today there are no more than 5,000 Jews in Bulgaria.

On the occasion of the commemoration of the events of 1943, Eddie Schwartz, president of the Organization of Jews in Bulgaria, stated, "At a time when children and women, men and old people so near to us are suffering and dying, victims of an insane inter-ethnic conflict in the Balkans, the Bulgarian example assumes the dimension of a prayer for humanity and for peace." ■

EMMANUEL VAILLANT
is a French journalist.

Olexander Dovzhenko

poet of the seventh art

by Lubomir Hosejko

The pioneering film-maker once dubbed "the Homer of the cinema" dominated the Ukrainian cinema for three decades

OLEXANDER Dovzhenko was one of the giants of Ukrainian cinema. He was born in the town of Sosnytsia on 30 August 1894, shortly before the invention of the cinema. After teaching for a while at a primary school, then studying economics at the Kiev Institute of Commerce, he was caught up in the maelstrom of civil war in 1918.

Once the Soviet regime had been established, Dovzhenko took up various responsibilities in education and the fine arts. In January 1920, he chose his political camp by joining the Borot'bisti, a Ukrainian peasant party in favour of independence. When it was dissolved he found himself, almost reluctantly, a member of the Ukrainian Communist Party.

After a spell with the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, which took him to Warsaw and then Berlin, where he took lessons from the Expressionist painter Erich Heckel, Dovzhenko settled in Kharkov, then Ukraine's administrative capital, and took up painting. He contributed illustrations and cartoons to several newspapers, and designed film posters.

After half-heartedly toying with the idea of a theatrical career, Dovzhenko ended up joining the Odessa film studios. He had earlier decided to give himself ten years in which to master the art of painting, and now assimilated cinematic technique within a year. The next step was to make his mark on the screen.

Dovzhenko's first film efforts in 1926 were minor works: a satirical comedy, *Vasya the Reformer*, and a burlesque short, *Love's Berry*. Then he directed his first successful film, a thriller called *The Diplomatic Pouch* (1927), in which he himself played the part of a stoker, his first and last screen role.

A year later, *Zvenyhora* secured Dovzhenko a place in the pantheon of great directors. It is an eclectic but spontaneously original work, a sweeping poetic pageant that encompasses ten centuries of Ukrainian history. The linking thread of this visual symphony in twelve cantos is the figure of an old man who embodies the patriarchal peasantry, and who is attached to the values of the past and indifferent to those of the Revolution. The film marked the beginning of Dovzhenko's own personal tragedy.

A deeply patriotic artist, Dovzhenko ran up against the ideological and aesthetic constraints of a totalitarian regime throughout his career. He was forced to make concessions to those in power and to praise them in sometimes overblown terms. He stated, for example, that his aim in *Arsenal* (1929) was to destroy nationalism and chauvinism and glorify the working classes. The film, which describes the workers' uprising against the Rada (central council) of Kiev, exaggerates the Bolsheviks' achievements. *Arsenal*, which bristles with didactic symbolism, is the most expressionist work produced by Ukrainian cinema.

That did not stop Dovzhenko campaigning actively for the recognition of national minorities. He championed above all the cause of his native land. *Earth* (1930), made at the watershed between two eras and a harbinger of great upheavals to come, is a hymn to the glory of nature and its perpetual confrontation with man. The shots showing the first tractor flattening the boundary markings in the fields and turning the peasantry into a collectivist society were much imitated in later Soviet films.

An epoch-making work that carries an extraordinarily powerful emotional charge and produces an almost physical effect of revelation, *Earth* was violently criticized for its pantheistic view of the world and its excessive naturalism. It was also denounced as nationalistic. Almost thirty years later, a jury of 117 historians meeting in Brussels in 1958 rated *Earth* one of the twelve best films of all time.

Dovzhenko (centre) during the making of *Michurin*, his first colour film, which was released in 1949.

Exiled in Moscow

Labelled a reactionary and banned from lecturing at the Kiev Film Institute, Dovzhenko was forced to stay in Moscow and had to pay a high price for his professional survival. His first sound film, *Ivan* (1932), foreshadowed Socialist Realism. It shows a radically transformed Ukrainian landscape, devastated by collectivization. Starving peasants try to escape deportation and the effects of an artificially engineered famine. Those taken on as navvies on the construction site of the Dnieper dam project are the central characters of this film of great pathos, which ambitiously tackles such issues as the forced industrialization of an agricultural community and the social rehabilitation of the peasantry through collective labour. At a time when Russian directors were becoming increasingly prosaic, Dovzhenko steered the Ukrainian

"Dovzhenko, who had given himself ten years in which to master the art of painting, assimilated cinematic technique within a year. The next step was to make his mark on the screen."

cinema towards more poetic horizons.

After the genocide of 1933, Dovzhenko was forced to endure a twofold exile: he was robbed of both his native land and his creative universe. Stalin sent him off to Siberia to shoot *Aerograd* (1935), a film about the construction of a Utopian city. The *mise-en-scène* of this visionary work shows Dovzhenko at his most inspired. It was the first time he had set eyes on the landscape of the taiga, and he immediately spotted its powerful aesthetic potential. *Aerograd*, which describes Japanese infiltration into eastern Siberia, delivers an ecological message. But it was soon forgotten.

Stalin wanted Dovzhenko to make a "Ukrainian *Chapayev*". He therefore authorized him to return to Kiev to direct *Shchors*, a historic and revolutionary epic to which he was to devote four years of his life. The film paints a moving portrait of the commander of the first Ukrainian Soviet division during the civil war. Shooting was long and difficult, as Dovzhenko was kept under close surveillance during the purges of 1936-37: the rushes were systematically sent to Moscow and checked by the Kremlin. Depending on Stalin's mood and the political situation at a particular moment, Dovzhenko might be forced to rejig whole sequences, sometimes even five or six times. Shchors, who had actually been killed by a stray bullet, had to be shown as the hero of a Bolshevik happy end. It is true that the war clouds were gathering.

A new form of creation

After the signing of the Russo-German pact in September 1939, western Ukraine was reunited with the Soviet Ukraine. The event was the subject of Dovzhenko's first documentary, *Liberation* (1940). He made two others during the Second World War, *The Battle for Our Soviet Ukraine* (1943), an extremely violent indictment of war, and the more considered and triumphant *Victory in the Ukraine* (1945). Towards the end of the war Dovzhenko wrote and secretly edited for the Yervan studios a documentary about Armenia, *Native Land* (he is not credited as editor).

Dovzhenko had earlier planned to make a film called *Ukraine in Flames*. But the publication in 1943 of extracts from the script caused a scandal. He was summoned before the Politburo by Beria, who controlled the Soviet Union's internal security system, and roundly admonished by Stalin, who accused him of being a defeatist and party to a nationalist plot. Such treatment only made Dovzhenko all the more determined to look beyond the Stalinist notion of the class struggle and criticize the education of Soviet youth and its ignorance of history, which he saw as the reason for the Red Army's defeat in 1941.

Dovzhenko was dismissed from his post as artistic director of the Kiev studios. He then embarked on a new career as a war correspondent, writing some thirty articles, pamphlets and short stories while the war was still on. The effervescence of his literary inspiration can be judged from stories like *The Mother*, *On the Barbed Wire* and *Before the Battle*, plays like *The Descendants of the Zaporozhe Cossacks* and *Life in Bloom*, and his novel *The Golden Gates*.

Final indignities

After the war, Dovzhenko's filming activity was severely cut back. The personality cult was at its height, and priority was given to biographical films. It was in that noisome ideological climate that he made his first colour film, *Michurin* (1949), a biography of the celebrated Russian agronomist. But Dovzhenko refused to produce a work of pure scientific popularization, and his final cut was turned down by the authorities. To save his film from destruction, he made a second version including various rationalist and didactic episodes, though he did manage to retain two of the original sequences. A hybrid work, *Michurin* is above all a tribute to nature and to solitude—a fate shared by both the film-maker and his subject. Michurin wanted to turn the earth into an orchard. That was also the secret dream of Dovzhenko, an ecologist before his time.

Dovzhenko suffered one final humiliation. When he had almost finished shooting the interiors of *Goodbye America* (1950), he was locked out of the studios. He had made the mistake of choosing a sensitive subject, taken from a short story by the American Annabel Buckart. The central character of the story, Anna Bedford, who works at the American embassy in Moscow, refuses to become a spy and ends up going over to the Soviet camp. As always, Dovzhenko gave a poetic dimension to the story, one of political brainwashing. Once again he was disavowed: the Cold War was at its height.

Stalin's death in 1953 completely changed Dovzhenko's life. He lectured at the State Film Institute in Moscow, did some more writing, and devoted the last three years of his life to preparing *Poem of the Sea*. But he died on 25 November 1956, shortly before shooting was due to start. He left six unfilmed screenplays, including one of *Taras Bulba*, which he had always wanted to direct. His wife and collaborator Yulia Solntseva loyally continued his work and directed *Poem of the Sea* (1958), *The Flaming Years* (1961) and *The Enchanted Desna* (1964) from his screenplays.

Dovzhenko was not only a towering figure of Ukrainian cinema over almost three decades, but one of the most pioneering directors in the history of film. The man dubbed "the Homer of the cinema" by the Venice Film Festival immortalized on film an era that was at once productive and tragic. The price he had to pay was that although he miraculously survived the system he was totally ostracized by it.

His work, with its Gogolian undertones, can be seen as a long lyrical meditation on what it means to be Ukrainian. His formal innovations, such as the meditative pause, the voice-over and an editing style that breaks free from the spatio-temporal restrictions of the image, established a filmic syntax that was totally new for the period. His brand of realism, at once poetic, revolutionary, romantic and socialist in form, was always national in content. Although his message was occasionally obscured by the philosophical digressions that accompanied his lyrical outpourings, his poetic language inspired many film-makers. Kinugasa, Kurosawa and Rossellini, to name but three, owed much to Dovzhenko.

Worshipped abroad but all too often detested by his own people, Dovzhenko was a true poet who always highlighted the purest aspects of the beautiful. His work marks the triumph of beauty over truth, of innermost conviction over reason. ■

"He was summoned before the Politburo by Beria and roundly admonished by Stalin, who accused him of being a defeatist and party to a nationalist plot."

LUBOMIR HOSEJKO is a French cinema critic of Ukrainian origin. He is a member of the Ukrainian Film-makers' Union, and, as a specialist in films made by expatriate Ukrainians, works for several newspapers in the Ukraine and elsewhere. He is currently engaged in the creation of a Ukrainian Film Library and is working on a history of the Ukrainian cinema.

After Dovzhenko's death his wife Yulia Solntseva, who had worked closely with him, made several films based on his scenarios. Right, a scene from *Poem of the Sea*, released in 1959.

The Dawn of Serenity: Letter from Borobudur

The Buddhist sanctuary of Borobudur (Indonesia) is one of the jewels of the world cultural heritage. Eiji Hattori, a specialist in Buddhist art and thought, has long been fascinated by this great monument. Here he suggests a new interpretation of its symbolism.

DAWN. The endless forest of coconut trees is sleeping beneath white mist, while to the east the elegant silhouette of Mount Merapi stands out against a background of golden light. Smoke is rising gently from the volcano. Here and there on the awakening plain below a cock crows and breaks the silence. The lines of stupas stand like silent shadows in the cool of the early morning. Among them I can see the statue of a Buddha facing the rising sun; the new day's light does not seem to disturb his meditation for an instant.

It is the dawn of serenity.

In the half light I can make out a man dressed in white sitting at the foot of the central stupa. A strange vibration emanates from him. I listen. He is murmuring a sutra. Perhaps one of Java's few Buddhists,[1] his hands are joined as he calmly greets the sun that by now is shining on Mount Merapi. Then he goes silently away.

This is not my first visit to Borobudur. The more I get to know this monument, the more I am dazzled by its beauty. Some twenty years ago UNESCO launched an appeal to the international community to save it. Twenty-seven countries responded and worked with UNESCO and Indonesian experts to move a million stones over a ten-year period so that this chandi[2] could live again in its original form. Borobudur is an exceptional place. It is not a temple—it has no place for worship nor for making offerings—but a huge Buddhist sanctuary that is both a stupa[3] and a mandala (a cosmic image).

by Eiji Hattori

"I see the statue of a Buddha facing the rising sun." At right of photo, the volcanic peak of Mt. Merapi.

In eighth-century Java the rulers of the prosperous Sailendra (*saila indra*: king of the mountains) dynasty converted to Mahayana[4] Buddhism, a form of Buddhism that came into being around the same time as the beginning of the Christian era. Using the most advanced techniques available, they built this brilliantly designed stone mandala some time around the year 800. Thousands of labourers, craftsmen and artists worked on it. But how brief was the life-span of their masterpiece! Less than a century after its completion Borobudur had disappeared into oblivion, rather like the earth mandala in ancient India that returned to dust after seven days of use.

Why did the dynasty, which had built other masterpieces in central Java, abandon it in the tenth century and turn its attention to the eastern part of the island? Could it have been because of an eruption of Mount Merapi and the violent earthquake that would have followed? Like Pompeii beneath its shroud of ash, Borobudur fell into a thousand-year sleep. It was not until 1814 that the legendary chandi, buried deep in the jungle, was rediscovered by an agent sent out by Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, at that time the British governor of Java.

The three spheres

Let us take a closer look at Borobudur. On the Kedu plain, formerly known as the garden of Java, the sanctuary stands on the top of a decapitated hill and is built of andesite, a bluish-grey volcanic rock. It is a colossal pyramid of superimposed tiers that are crowned by an enormous bell-shaped stupa. From a distance you can tell that the whole construction is organized around this stupa.

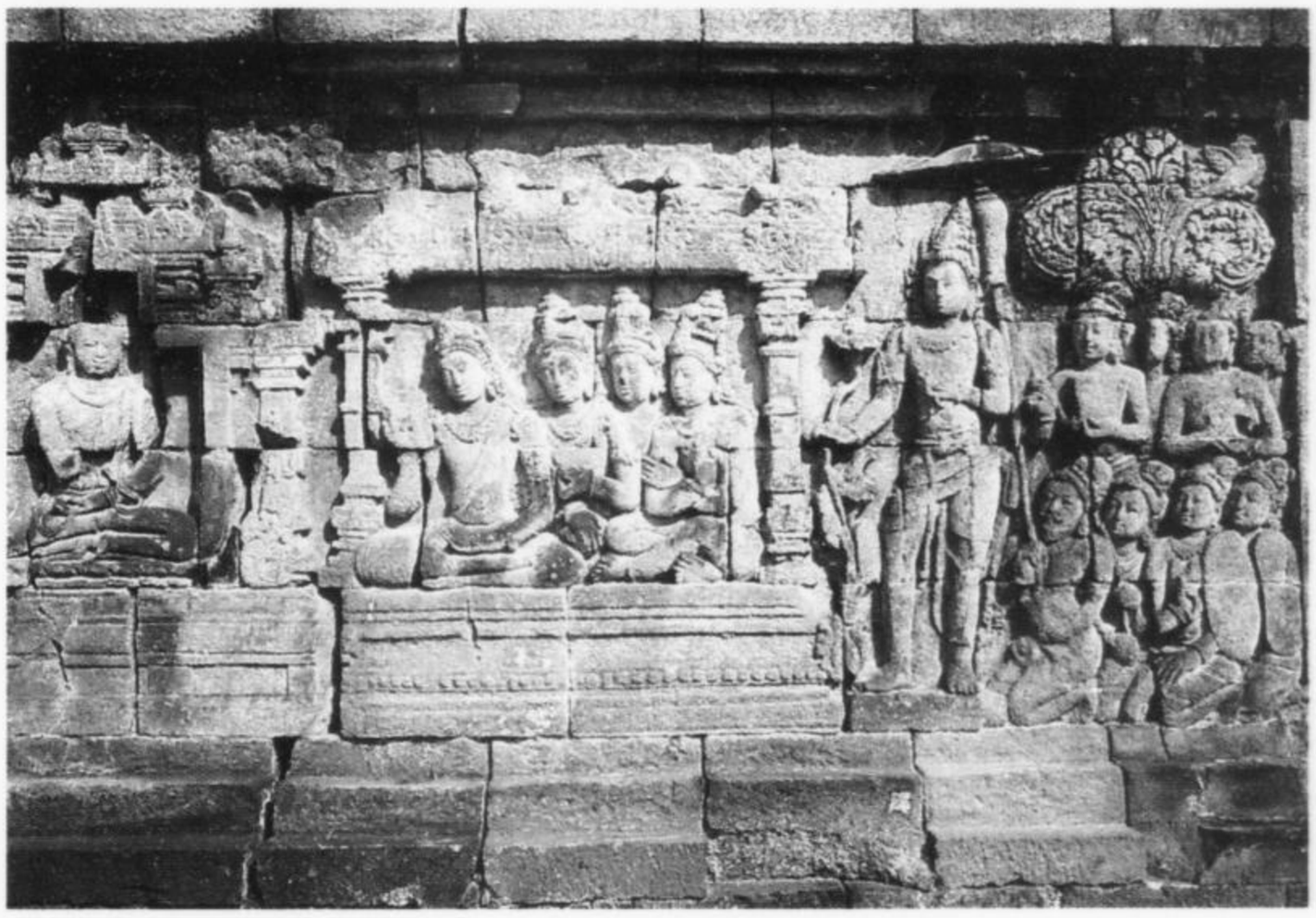
At closer range you can see a heavy stone encasement around the base that was probably built to shore up the monument during its construction. It hides the real base or "hidden foot", which is decorated with 160 reliefs, all of which were photographed shortly after they were discovered in the late nineteenth century.

These "invisible" reliefs depict the Sphere of the Desires that the human being is bound to, the *kâmadhâtu*. I do not agree with theories that claim this part of the monument was deliberately covered up for religious motives to prevent pilgrims from

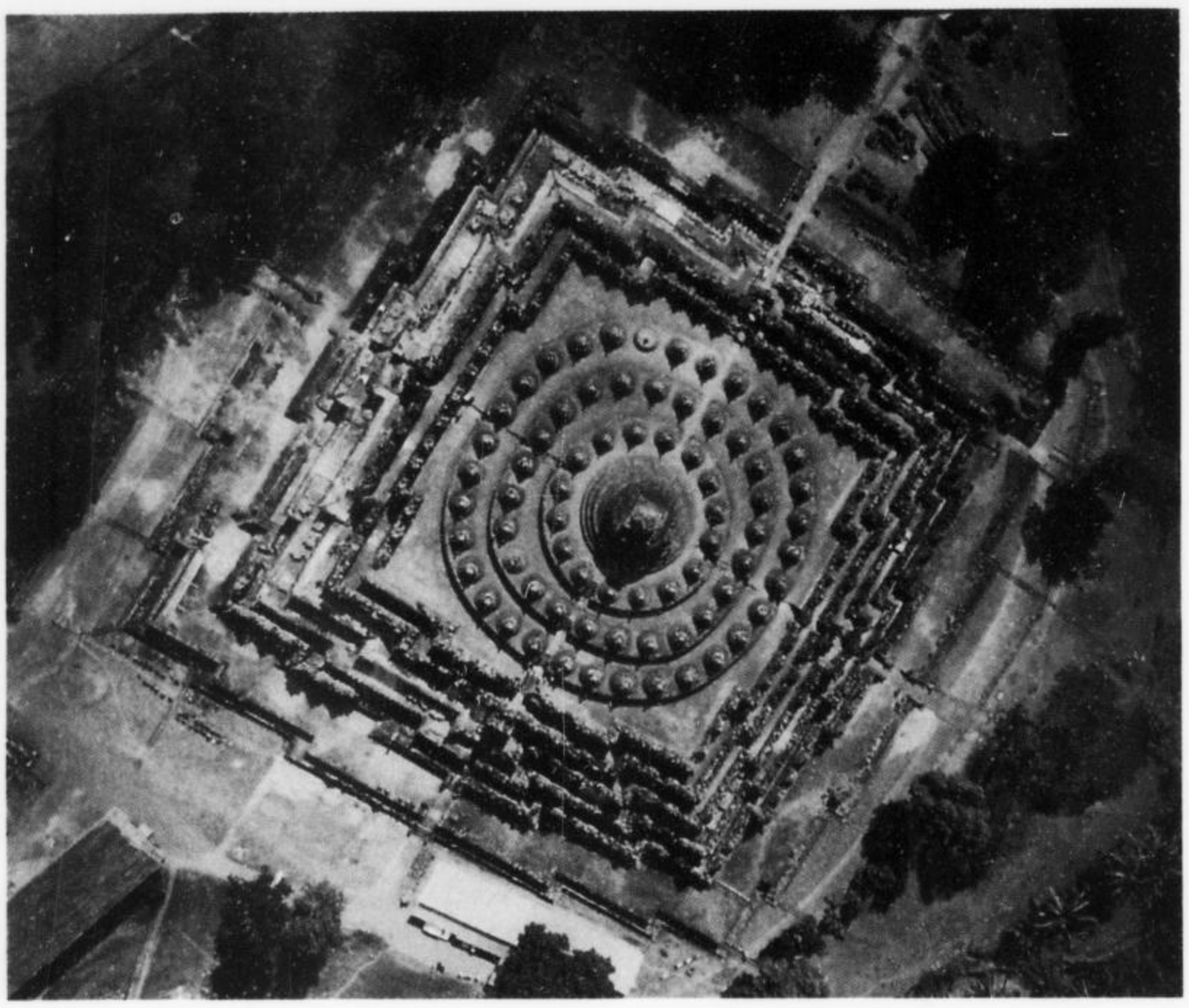
"In eighth-century Java the rulers of the prosperous Sailendra dynasty converted to Mahayana Buddhism. Using the most advanced techniques available, they built this brilliantly designed stone mandala. Thousands of labourers, craftsmen and artists worked on it. But how brief was the life-span of their masterpiece!"

seeing it. On the one hand, the "hidden foot" contains unfinished reliefs indicating that work suddenly came to a halt due to some unexpected event. On the other, as I shall explain later, such an error seems quite inconceivable in such a carefully planned monument. This part of the mandala symbolizes "extreme exteriority": each side has a stairway in the middle, leading up to the monument's highest point.

The main structure of the sanctuary is composed of this foundation and, standing on top of it, five square terraces. The superstructure consists of three circular terraces. This is the basic shape of the mandala: the square, a symbol of the earth, and the circle, symbolizing the sky, combine to produce



Borobudur's bas-reliefs are a vast picture-book in stone illustrating the life of the historical Buddha and the spiritual quest for Enlightenment of Sudhana, the son of a rich merchant.



"In Borobudur the transition from earth to sky, from form to non-form, is made gently. I see it as an intentional transition towards the circle. The square form is not rigorously adhered to. Nor are the first two terraces exactly circular. Only the topmost terrace is a perfect circle." Left, aerial view of Borobudur.
Opposite page, the "Mandala matrix" (*Taizo-kai mandara*), an initiatory painting of Japanese Tantric Buddhism. The height of the mandala, painted on canvas from a Japanese temple, is 179 cm.

the number nine, the supreme figure of Buddhism.

The galleries, which have to be visited clockwise to respect the ritual circumambulation, begin on the second terrace. They are lined with 1,300 wonderful bas-reliefs 2,500 metres long. This is *rûpadhatu*, the Sphere of Forms, in which the human being gives up his thirst for desire but keeps his name and form. This immense stone book relates Buddha's life as told in the sutras. Nooks located on the outside of the balustrades that surround the galleries each contain a stone Buddha seated cross-legged on a lotus cushion. There are 432 in all.

Next we come to the foot of the upper part of the mandala. Here the view to the outside, hitherto impeded by the balustrades, suddenly opens up, so that one has a sense of spritual breadth as one enters the *arûpadhâtu*, the Sphere of Formlessness.

In Borobudur the transition from earth to sky, from form to non-form, is made gently. The square form is not rigorously adhered to: the edges around each square terrace jut out and break up the hard right angles, perhaps in an attempt to use architecture to relieve the monotony of the pilgrim's perambulation. Personally I see an intentional transition to the circle. Aerial photos show that the first two terraces are not exactly circular. A slight deformation makes them more like squares! Only the topmost terrace is a perfect circle.

Borobudur's three spheres mark the spiral stages of an ascension that leads the pilgrim up to the stupa of ultimate truth. This central stupa, whose walls are not perforated like those of the others, contains *nothing*: the ultimate point is nothing but emptiness (*sûnyatâ*). Buddha himself is hidden. He is there yet not there; he is being

Borobudur: from rediscovery to World Heritage listing

The site: a vast Mahayana Buddhist monument in the form of a pyramid-shaped mandala, built in the heart of Java around 800 A.D. by the Sailendra dynasty and abandoned shortly after its completion.

Size: the square base, with sides measuring some 120 metres, covers an area of almost one and a half hectares; the central dome that crowns the monument is almost 35 metres above the base.

1814: rediscovery of the monument by Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, who has the site cleared of rubble and vegetation. Specialists compile documentation based on drawings.

1885: discovery of "the hidden foot"—the original base—and its bas-reliefs concealed behind the retaining wall needed to keep the structure from sliding.

1907-1911: Theodoor Van Erp carries out the first restoration work. He dismantles and rebuilds the three circular terraces and the stupas.

1955: Indonesia seeks UNESCO's advice on measures to prevent the monument's dilapidation.

1972: UNESCO launches an international appeal to save Borobudur.

1975-1982: restoration work carried out.

23 February 1983: inaugural ceremony to mark the completion of restoration work. Total cost: $20 million, two-thirds from the Indonesian government, and $7 million from UNESCO's international campaign, in which 27 countries took part.

1991: Borobudur included on UNESCO's World Heritage list.

and non-being. Each of the seventy-two small stupas with perforated walls that stand on the three terraces contains a statue of the Buddha. His face can only be imperfectly made out through the gaps in the stonework. These gaps are of different shapes and become less numerous as one approaches the central stupa, signifying the Buddha's increasing invisibility. All these Buddhas have the same hand position (*mudra*): that of the perpetually-moving wheel of the Law.

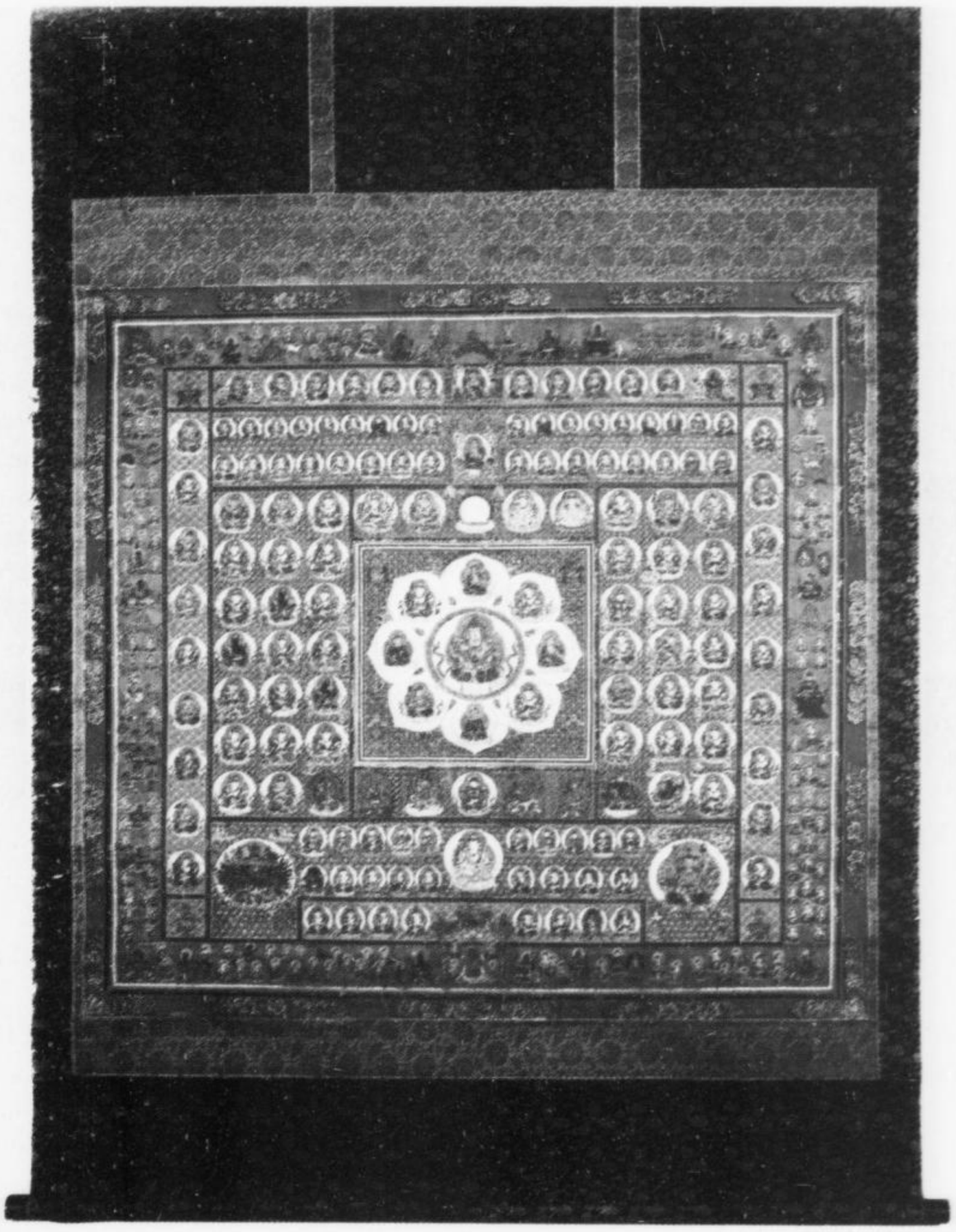
When we reach the summit, we suddenly share the cosmic vision of Mahayana Buddhism. Here the supreme reality is unveiled, light is born! Yes, Borobudur, which shimmers in a thousand colours from morning to night, itself glistens like a huge beacon. The sanctuary's 504 Buddhas face the four points of the compass and embrace the world with merciful, shining eyes. Not only these stupas, but the nooks in the wall-parapets, the little towers, the smallest parts of the edifice all reach skywards as if to seize the breath of passing clouds.

The mandala of mandalas

According to this interpretation, Borobudur is the lotus home of the "Great Buddha of Light", who is depicted in a myriad of small, finely carved Buddhas. Dust itself becomes light. As the doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism has it, the one resides in the many, which is itself the manifestation of the one. In the *Gandhavyûha*, the sacred text of Mahayana Buddhism, light is not the enemy of shade: it is the light of the original emptiness, which transcends the opposition between being and nothingness.

Let us now look at the mandala—this esoteric image that aids active meditation of the Buddhist cosmos—formed by Borobudur. Mandalas, whether painted or sculpted, like the statues in the To-ji temple in Kyoto, are always oriented in relation to a central point. Borobudur, which looks out at the four points of the compass while its "heart" is empty, is a perfect illustration of the mandala concept.

In 1930 the French archaeologist and architect Henri Parmentier suggested that Borobudur might have been originally conceived as an immense stupa resting on square terraces but that problems of stability forced the builders to rethink the plans for the upper part. This theory was supported by several participants in the international symposium on Borobudur held in Tokyo in 1980, but it seems unacceptable to me. Even if Borobudur underwent minor changes during its construction, the extreme rigour of its design rules out the idea of any such architectural compromise.



A mysterious concordance

The mysterious concordance of the numbers one sees at Borobudur is to my mind sufficient proof. As I have said, there are 432 Buddhas on the square terraces and 72 others on the concentric terraces of the upper part. These figures are not a mere coincidence. Since the stairways divide each of these groups of statues by four, in each case their total number (432 and 72) and the number of each group thus obtained (108 and 18) can be divided by three and nine. In other words, it is clear that the entire structure was conceived as a function of the number three, which symbolizes unity and the square of three, nine, a sacred number in Buddhism.

Another researcher, J. G. De Casparis, believed that the central stupa crowning the structure was a tenth terrace, corresponding to the ten stages passed through by the bodhisattva ("Buddha-to-be") before reaching the state of Buddhahood. But when Borobudur was built only six stages were practised in Java. Surely they are represented in the six square terraces. But how can the transition from the square to the circle be explained?

I had never been entirely happy with any of these interpretations. Then one day I read the *Jûjû shin ron* (Treatise on the Ten Stages of Thought) in which Kukai, the Japanese Buddhist Grand Master who

founded the esoteric Shingon sect at the beginning of the ninth century, expounds his conception of the mandala.

In his eyes the "ascending transformation of the spirit", for which the mandala is the pictorial expression, is effected in nine exoteric (apparent) stages, followed by a final, esoteric (secret) stage. Could there be any better definition of Borobudur's architectural significance? Starting from the sphere of animal desire, the monk eventually reaches the "spirit laden with mystery" (*Himitsu-shôgon-Shin*), the culminating and hermetic point. The awakening he experiences then transforms the world into light. Was this not the secret that the immense mandala was whispering to us in the early light of dawn?

So is Borobudur a monument of esoteric Mahayana Buddhism? I cannot say so categorically, but I am profoundly convinced that it is.

Let there be no mistake. I am not claiming that Kukai influenced the building of Borobudur. I am only saying that Borobudur and Kukai's teachings share a common source. Kukai himself was initiated into the esoteric doctrine of Shingon (True Word) in China and introduced the first mandala to Japan.

In which year did he return to his country? In 806, at the very time when the Sailendra were building Borobudur on the island of Java. Let us not forget either that the Todaiji, the temple of the Great Buddha in Nara (Japan), the conception of which was based on the same *Gandavyûha* that is illustrated along most of Borobudur's square terraces, was inaugurated in 751, the date when work on the foundations of the Javanese sanctuary is thought to have begun.

The sea route to China

This apparent coincidence is not confined to Japan and Indonesia. In Ceylon at the same time thousands of monks practised the same doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism in the monastery of Abhayagiri, which was in permanent contact with China. And to reach China the Sinhalese monks did not cross mountains but the sea!

This is where the maritime Silk Road comes in. It played a decisive role in the story of the meeting of civilizations. It was a speedy route for the exchange of goods and culture between the East and West, perhaps even before there was an overland Silk Road. It was used by many different peoples: Indians, Chinese, Greeks, Romans and Arabs, as well as Indonesians. Ceylon was a port of call for those who crossed the Indian Ocean, and once across the Malacca Straits they either made a detour around Singapore or sailed along the coasts of Sumatra and Java before heading northwards for Canton in southern China. The maritime Silk Road eventually stretched from Italy (Rome) to Japan (Nara), uniting the Indian Ocean, the western Pacific, the China Sea, the Red Sea and the Gulf.

Borobudur must be seen in the context of this network of extremely rich and varied maritime exchanges. The seas of Southeast Asia teemed with activity in the seventh and eighth centuries. And when talking about Indo-Javanese civilization, especially a Buddhist monument, we should not forget the part played by cultural influences from nations other than India.

Look carefully at the meditating Buddhas of Borobudur. Their expression differs from that of Indian or Thai statues, and has a greater affinity with those of China and

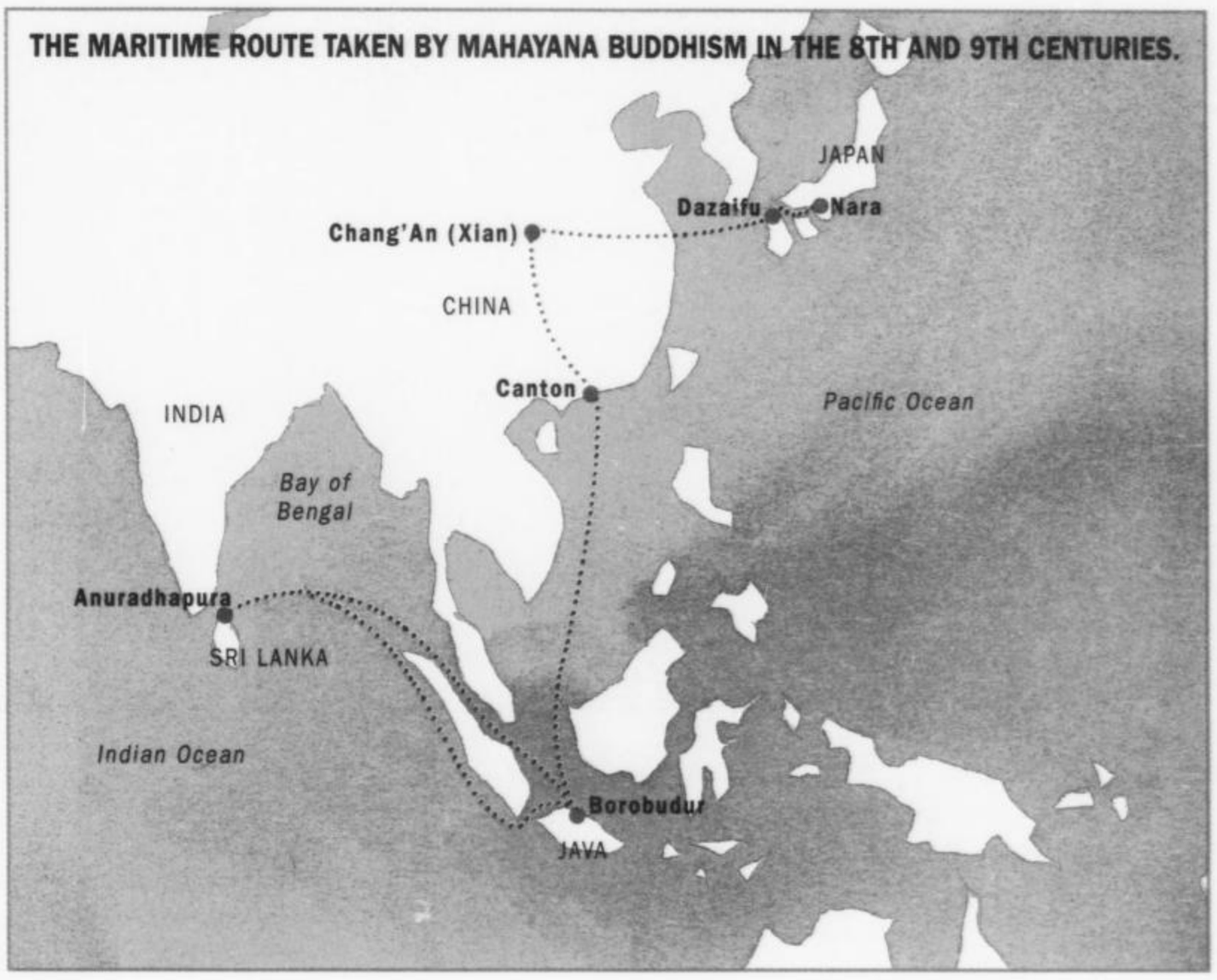
Japan. Did not the Sailendra have a large fleet that travelled to China as well as to India and Ceylon? Moreover the monks of Abhayagiri often stopped in Java on their way to China. They were even reported to have founded a community in the eighth century on a hill near Borobudur.

Could there be a link between the presence of this monastic community and the building of Borobudur? There is no definite proof, but the shape of the stupas in Borobudur is not unlike that of the stupas in the lotus style of Anuradhapura, Ceylon's ancient capital. I also remember being struck by the resemblance between two statues of Buddha discovered in the ruins of Abhayagiri and the statues at Borobudur.

It is of course impossible to understand the conception of Borobudur without referring to the local culture. In Indonesia there was a form of ancestor worship that venerated the ancestors' spirits by building tiered pyramids in their honour. Could this great pyramid-shaped mandala have been built without such a tradition? The world owes this unique heritage to the Indonesian people.

The sun has risen over Borobudur. My thoughts turn to the outward-looking spirit of the eighth century. There were no cultural boundaries then. Peoples absorbed each other's cultures like travellers slaking their thirst together. Have those far-off times gone forever? I cannot believe that they have. Down in the water lotuses communicate with one another through their roots. Dew drops on petals reflect the same moon that shines down on white flowers thousands of miles apart. And the sun that shines on Mount Merapi now shone on pilgrims' faces at a time when beauty was the splendour of truth. ■

"Borobudur must be seen in the context of the network of extremely rich and varied maritime exchanges formed by the maritime Silk Road. The seas of Southeast Asia teemed with activity in the seventh and eighth centuries."



"Not only these stupas, but the nooks in the wall-parapets, the little towers, the smallest parts of the edifice all reach skywards as if to seize the breath of passing clouds." (Opposite page). Below: "Each of the 72 small stupas with perforated walls that stand on the three terraces contains a statue of the Buddha. His face can only be imperfectly made out through the gaps in the stonework."

"Is Borobudur a monument of esoteric Mahayana Buddhism? I cannot say so categorically, but I am profoundly convinced that it is."

EIJI HATTORI,
of Japan, is currently an advisor for culture and science to the Director-General of UNESCO. A UNESCO staff member for many years, he initiated the Organization's Integral Study of the Silk Roads project.

1. The Javanese converted to Islam in the 15th century.
2. A name given to Indonesia's oldest monuments.
3. A reliquary or commemorative monument.
4. A sanskrit word meaning "a great means of progression" or "Great Vehicle".

Thomas Mann

The new obscurantism

This is the third and final instalment of Thomas Mann's address to a meeting organized in Nice in 1935 by the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation on the theme of "the education of modern man" (see our two previous issues). This ardent defender of European culture and civilization concludes with a bitterly ironical commentary on the rise of irrationality in a Germany delivered to Nazism.

Text selected and presented by Edgardo Canton

NECESSITY may indeed teach people to think, but, one may wonder, to think in what way? We have seen for ourselves what happens when the masses—the middle and lower middle classes, reduced to penury, dispossessed, racked by distress and filled with resentment—start to think and to indulge in mystical speculation. The petty bourgeoisie had been taught that reason had been done away with, that intelligence was there to be insulted, and that those bogeymen not unconnected with socialism, internationalism and even the Jewish mentality might in fact be to blame for their plight; with this sanction from above, they turned their thoughts against reason and learned to get their tongues around the difficult but reassuring term "irrationalism". The spread of irrationalism among the people at large during the second and third decades of this century is perhaps the most deplorable and ridiculous spectacle that history has to offer. It was the petty bourgeois who had risen from the ranks of the masses who themselves, by dint of febrile mental effort, came up with the term "intellectual monster", a stupid expression but one that had, to a certain extent, the blessing of the higher echelons, where the anti-intellectual spirit reigned, and one that carried a vulgar punch, a deadly turn of phrase that was primarily directed, in matters political and social, against all reasonable, peaceful aspirations and against all European sentiments, but above and beyond that, against all intellectual discipline and morality.

A miasma of bad literature

Since, however, the mind, even when it is anti-intellectual, cannot but remain mind, its lowly offspring, the average man with a few ideas in his head, cannot do without either mind or thought. He talks, philosophizes and writes, but everything emanating from him is but a caricature of mind, low-powered intellectualism. The air is heavy with thoughts spawned in the overwrought brains of the populace. A stifling miasma of bad literature hangs over the country. Mass man, reasoning against reason itself, has presumptuously claimed for himself the exclusive right to think, speak and write. He has silenced everyone else and, confident that he will not be contradicted, avails himself of his privilege in a way that takes one's breath away and tempts one to curse the liberal democracy that taught all and sundry to read and write.

Thought itself and the written or spoken word seem as if forever sullied by such despicable misuse. Freed from all restraints, a derisory culture, deplorably worked up to fever pitch, spreads far and wide its pseudo-knowledge and its evil doctrines, its farrago of mystagogic nonsense and its impudent decisions, with their thousand-year pretensions; and learning, now intimidated, now sheepishly sympathizing, dare only feebly and fearfully raise some slight objection. Some day soon, these "thinkers" will be in a position to put their "ideas" boldly into practice everywhere and write them by main force into history. They will get the history they deserve.

A philosophy of violence and falsehood

Is there not, nevertheless, from the Christian point of view, something moving about the sight of this victorious uprising by the poor in spirit, this overthrow of learning, culture, intelligence and civilization and their replacement by the taste and judgment of the lowly, the publicans and sinners? One should, I believe, be very careful about drawing such parallels. There

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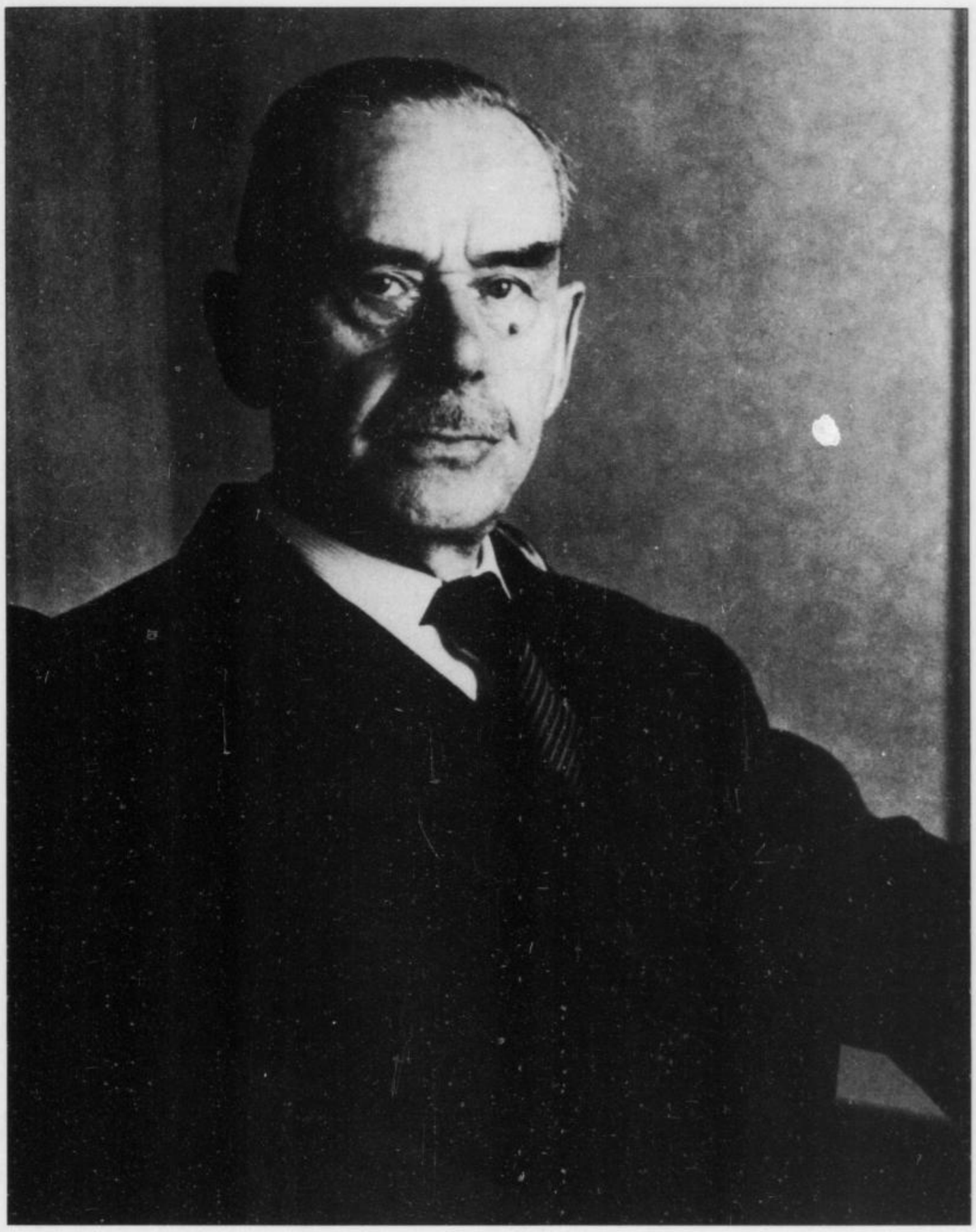


Thomas Mann in 1950.

are, between the Christian revolution and the revolution of the masses, differences of character, differences in regard to the feelings of kindliness and humanity as I would say to put it simply, that suffice to put us seriously on our guard against misunderstandings and false comparisons.

Some might reply that the modern movement is heroic in character, whereas the Christian revolution and the French Revolution were altruistic and humanitarian. But much as I love and admire heroism in its great spiritual manifestations, I cannot bring myself to believe in the heroism of the common people. Their world is not heroic, it is a sensation-seeking, detective-story-like world; it strongly resembles the atmosphere of dime novels and sensational films, but there is nothing heroic about it.

One would hesitate to apply the word heroic to the new methods of crime and murder, the creations of a small-time fanaticism, that are being followed in the realm of politics. Merely to be able to grasp the meaning of heroism, one needs to move on a higher moral plane than that of a philosophy that takes violence and falsehood to be the fundamental principles of life. This is in point of fact the philosophy of the petty bourgeois who have been infected by the urge to think. Apart from violence, they believe only in falsehood, and believe in it even more fervently than in violence. Among the European ideas that, since they have gone up in the world, they hold to have been abolished for good—truth, freedom and justice—it is truth that they find most detestable and impossible. They put "myth" in its place, this term figuring as prominently in their intellectual vocabulary as heroism.

The threat of war and the ruin of civilization

Clearly, what we are dealing with here are, again, a degenerate mind and a debased literature. There are certain vital interests to which the demands of pure mind must give way. Truth is an absolute, but life, the realm of the permissive, is not; life requires that truth which is useful and advantageous to it. So be it; but to acknowledge falsehood as the only life-giving power, the only power capable of making history, to elevate such a system to the status of a philosophy in such a way that it becomes impossible to distinguish truth from falsehood, to establish in Europe a disgraceful pragmatism that repudiates mind itself in favour of profit, that without compunction commits or approves crimes so long as they serve the cause of its ersatz absolutes, that does not shrink from the idea of falsity but values falsity as much as truth as long as it finds it useful—this is what was in store for the type of people to whom I refer. I would not go so far as to claim that they represent the "modern man" we are supposed to be discussing, but they are a common type; multitudes of them exist, and when I say that they determine the age in which they live, I am doing no more than expressing their own conviction, the conviction that provides the devastating impetus with which they are preparing to take on and conquer the world—a world whose moral scruples hinder it from defending itself effectively against them.

The outcome to which such a conflict would lead is absolutely clear and certain: it would be war, a disaster of immense proportions, the ruin of civilization. I am firmly convinced that this is the only possible outcome of such people's philosophy in action. That was why I thought it my duty to speak about them and about the terrible threat they pose. ■

THE DELHI

Education for all

towards education for all

From 13 to 16 December 1993, the leaders of nine high-population countries—Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan—gathered in New Delhi for the world's first Summit on education for all. The goal of the Summit, which was hosted by the Government of India and sponsored by UNESCO, UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), was to mobilize high-level political support and financial and technical resources for the achievement of universal primary education and adult literacy.

These countries, the home of half the world's population, over 70 per cent of its adult illiterates and more than half of its out-of-school children, face major obstacles as they seek to achieve these goals. The size of the challenge confronting them is indicated by their population numbers, rapid demographic growth, vast distances, and excessive urbanization combined with the existence of geographically remote and scattered rural populations of great cultural and linguistic diversity.

At the same time, these countries contain tremendous potential for the future, given their impressive scientific and technological capabilities, the rapid advances they have made towards industrialization, their large numbers of trained and highly qualified personnel, and the possibilities open to them of benefiting from economies of scale in education and other fields.

Taking into account these facts, the following Declaration was adopted.

1. WE, the leaders of nine high-population developing nations of the world, hereby reaffirm our commitment to pursue with utmost zeal and determination the goals set in 1990 by the World Conference on Education for All and the World Summit on Children, to meet the basic learning needs of all our people by making primary education universal and expanding learning opportunities for children, youth and adults. We do so in full awareness that our countries contain more than half of the world's people and that the success of our efforts is crucial to the achievement of the global goal of education for all.

2. WE recognize that:

2.1 the aspirations and development goals of our countries can be fulfilled only by assuring education to all our people, a right promised both in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the constitutions and law of each of our countries;

2.2 education is the pre-eminent means for promoting universal human values, the quality of human resources, and respect for cultural diversity;

2.3 the education systems in our countries have made great strides in offering education to substantial numbers, and yet have not fully succeeded in providing quality education to all of our people, indicating the need for developing creative approaches, both within and outside the formal systems;

2.4 the content and methods of education

DECLARATION

must be developed to serve the basic learning needs of individuals and societies, to empower them to address their most pressing problems—combating poverty, raising productivity, improving living conditions, and protecting the environment—and to enable them to play their rightful role in building democratic societies and enriching the cultural heritage;

2.5 successful education programmes require complementary and convergent actions on adequate nutrition, effective health care and appropriate care and development of the young child, in the context of the role of the family and the community;

2.6 the education and empowerment of girls and women are important goals in themselves and are key factors in contributing to social development, well-being and education of present and future generations, and the expansion of the choices available to women for the development of their full potential;

2.7 the pressure of population growth has seriously strained the capacity of education systems and impeded needed reforms and improvements; moreover, given the age structure of the populations in our countries, it will continue to do so throughout the coming decade; and

2.8 education is, and must be, a societal responsibility, encompassing governments, families, communities and non-governmental organizations alike; it requires the commitment and participation of all, in a grand alliance that transcends diverse opinions and political positions.

3. CONSCIOUS of the vital role that education must play in the development of our societies, we hereby pledge that, by the year 2000 or at the earliest possible moment:

3.1 we will ensure a place for every child in a school or appropriate education programme according to his or her capabilities, in order that no child be deprived of education for lack of a teacher, learning materials, or adequate space; we pledge this in fulfillment of our commitment under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which we have ratified;

3.2 we will consolidate efforts towards the basic education of youth and adults from public and private sources, improving and expanding our literacy and adult education programmes within the context of an integrated strategy of basic education for all our people;

3.3 we will eliminate disparities of access to basic education arising from gender, age, income, family, cultural, ethnic and linguistic differences, and geographic remoteness;

3.4 we will improve the quality and relevance of basic education programmes by intensifying efforts to improve the status, training and conditions of teachers, to improve learning contents and materials and to carry out other necessary reforms of our education systems;

3.5 we will, in all of our actions, accord to human development the highest priority at national and other levels, ensuring that a growing share of national and community resources is dedicated to basic education, and improving the management of existing resources for education; and

3.6 we will rally all sectors of our society towards education for all, as we hereby endorse the Framework for Action accompanying this Declaration and undertake to review our progress at the national level and to share our experiences among ourselves and with the global community.

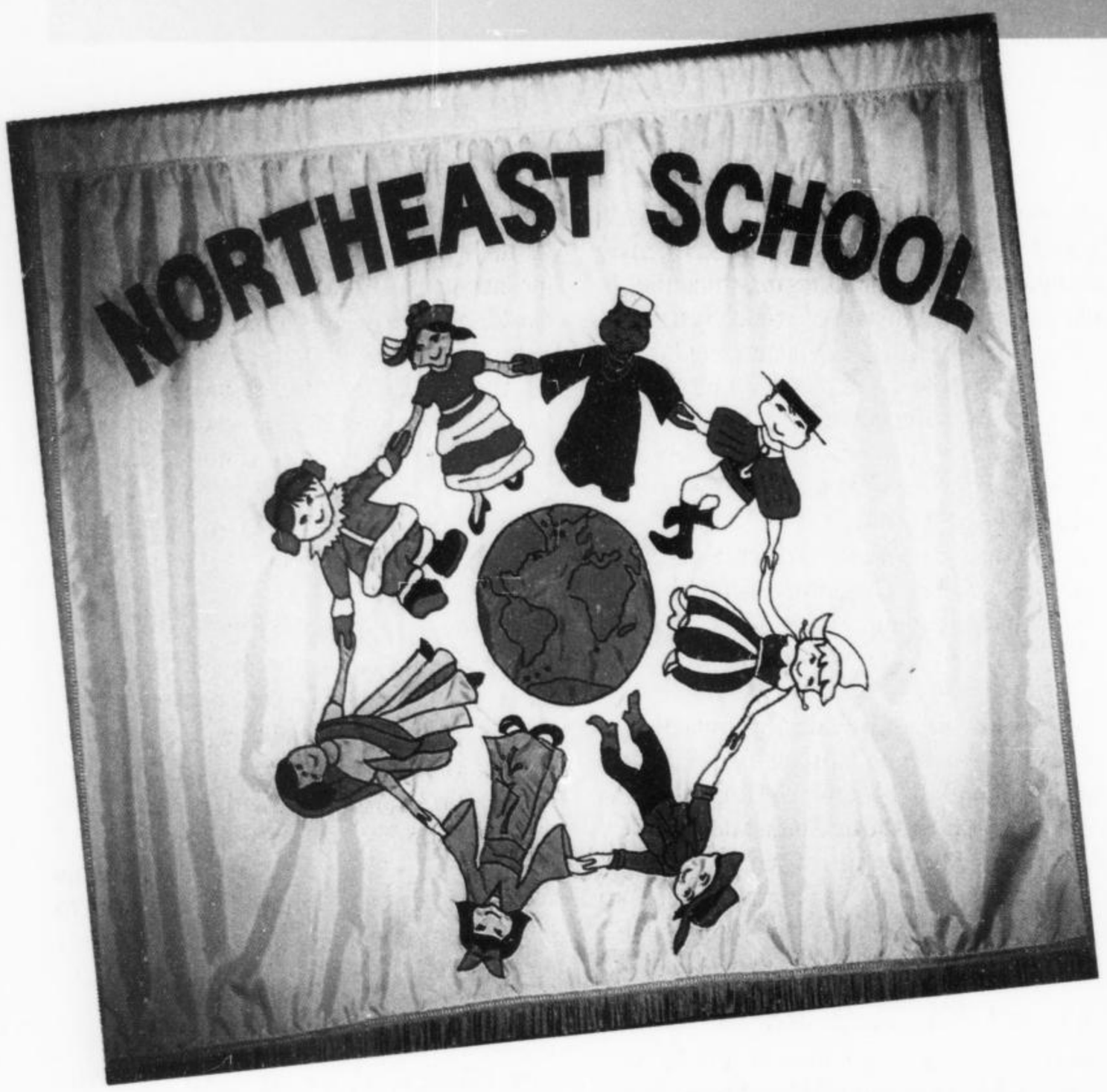
4. WE therefore call upon:

4.1 international collaborators to raise substantially their support for our efforts to expand our national capacities for expanding and improving basic education services;

4.2 international financial institutions, in the context of structural adjustments, to recognize education as a critical investment without imposing predetermined ceilings on such investments, and to promote an international environment to enable countries to sustain their socio-economic development; and

4.3 the community of nations to join with us in reaffirming the commitment to the goal of education for all and in intensifying their efforts to achieve it by the year 2000 or at the earliest possible moment. ■

THE U.N. GOES TO SCHOOL



by Sally Swing Shelley

An American school whose pupils are drawn from many countries has modelled itself on the United Nations

THE Northeast International Magnet School in Montclair, New Jersey (U.S.A.), is a publicly funded school with approximately 375 boys and girls aged from four to eleven. About one-third of the students come from forty different countries, and altogether the children speak twenty-seven different languages.

Northeast is one of a number of "magnet schools" that were created several years ago in order to encourage racial integration. About one-third of the students at Northeast are of African origin, reflecting the fact that roughly one-fourth of the population of Montclair itself are Americans of African origin. Each magnet school focuses on one study area, international affairs in the case of Northeast. Others focus on the performing arts, science and other special fields.

"With the population we had," says Marty Miller, a teacher at the school, "and with a principal who had the perspicacity to see that we are very similar to the United Nations in that we have children from all over who really need to live with and understand each other, it was not difficult to turn the school into a mini-United Nations."

Children in each home room, the place where the day's first class is held, invented the name of a country, made a flag for it and chose traits by which their country should be known to the others. Thus one home room is called "Afreemerica", while others are called "Nigypt", "Angel Land" and "Happlandia". The kindergarten children called their countries "Kinderfolk" and "Kinderlund".

Each child who enters the school is given a passport which is stamped as he or she moves through the various grades. When they leave school, students are allowed to keep the passport as a souvenir.

The student body elected a Secretary-General, eight-year-old Maya Berry, who is in second grade. Her deputy is Under Secretary-General Brian Conroy, a fifth-grade student.

A central part of the exercise is the meeting of the Security Council, to which all "nations" send ambassadors. The Security Council takes up complaints which are brought to it for discipline.

Marty Miller tells of one complaint that was brought to the effect that one country was making too much noise for the others to study. The children voted in the Council to send an ambassador to ask for the noise to stop, and to say that if it did not then sanctions would be imposed—in this case the children in the offending home room would not be allowed out to play in the yard for a week. The offending nation complied.

Marty Miller believes that one aspect of the school particularly helps racial harmony. "The children are all equal," she says, "whether they are eleven or twelve years old in the fifth grade, or seven or eight years old in the second grade. The little ones look after the big ones and the big ones look after the little ones. It is clearly understood that nobody has any more power than anyone else. We have a committee of peers that our Social and Human Rights Council developed to help boys and girls who have difficulty getting along with others and say or do hurtful things. The Council drafted a resolution that was adopted by the General Assembly. According to this resolution, if a citizen of one country has a problem, the children will counsel the child who caused it as well as the victim (because they feel the victim also needs to understand why another child might have behaved in an unacceptable way), thereby helping to promote tolerance." ■

SALLY SWING SHELLEY,
of the United States, is a former information officer in UNESCO's liaison office with the United Nations in New York. She is currently UN correspondent with the German radio and television network *Deutsche Welle*.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

■ CHERCHEZ LA FEMME

As faithful readers of your magazine, which opens new cultural horizons to us, we nonetheless regret that it does not devote more space to women in science and the arts or in intellectual and social life. We are convinced that many women are just waiting to be discovered (in your monthly "Interview") or rediscovered (in your "Archives" feature). Their outlook on the world would definitely bolster your efforts to make known UNESCO's activities on behalf of the "universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for human rights and fundamental freedoms for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion."

CAROLYN MEDEL ANONUEVO,
SOFIA VALDIVIESO, UTA PAPEN
UNESCO INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION
HAMBURG, GERMANY

■ THE WINGS OF HAPPINESS

I was surprised to see in your April 1993 issue ("A Time to Love...") a mistaken interpretation by two authors, Henri Lopes and Jorge Enrique Adoum) of Aragon's line "There is no such thing as happiness in love".

The Second World War was the background of Aragon's love for Elsa. The shadows of their friends in the Resistance who had either been deported or tortured to death hovered between them. The context of their love clipped the wings of careless rapture on which perfect happiness is borne.

SYLVIANE SCHWER,
PARIS, FRANCE

Of course, this is one possible interpretation.

EDITOR

■ FRENCH WITH A CREOLE TWIST

Working as a socio-linguist in the French-speaking world, notably in Senegal, I would like to qualify slightly some of Stephen Wurm's remarks in his article "The Gift of Tongues" (February 1994) on the expanding use of metropolitan languages by young people in former colonial territories to the detriment of other lingua francas.

The "vernacularization" of numerous lingua francas in the capitals of the French-speaking countries (Wolof in Dakar, Sango in Bangui, Lingala in Kinshasa) leads to a radical change in attitude in relation to the former colonial language that has been maintained as the official language and educational vector. A language becomes a "vernacular" when it becomes the first language of city children, whatever their parents' origins. This language, which becomes dominant and increasingly complex, gradually acquires new functions in daily life. The influence of French learned at school is reflected in the appearance of "mixed" idioms—"Franlof" in Dakar, "Fransango" in Bangui, "Kinya-French" in Rwanda and "Lingala-French" in Kinshasa—that are widely used by young people and illustrate their acculturation and social status.

In rural areas the use of French is still highly regarded and French competes with the language that is tending to become the language of urban, even national, integration for all migrants.

This situation means that the prospects of teaching in a single language, French, are uncertain and that sooner or later problems concerning linguistic and educational policy will arise in the countries concerned.

CAROLINE JUILLARD
PARIS, FRANCE

■ HURA FOR ESPERANTO!

I wish to draw your attention to certain inaccuracies in the article entitled "Babel Revisited" by Peter Mühlhäusler in your February, 1994 issue. In the section of his article headed, "The attractions of a single language", the author makes two serious errors regarding Esperanto.

Mr. Mühlhäusler puts Esperanto on the same footing as abortive artificial-language projects such as Volapük. If he were better informed, he would know that in 1994 Esperanto is alive and well with its own press and literature, and that many persons use it throughout the world for their professional and personal relations.

Moreover, contrary to what Mr. Mühlhäusler asserts, Esperanto has no intention of replacing other languages. On the contrary, using Esperanto as a transnational language is presently the best way to protect the less widely used languages against the ravages of widely used tongues such as English. The author, though a linguist, seems to ignore the fact that the working language of the International Committee for Ethnic Liberties (IKEL) is Esperanto and that an interesting magazine devoted exclusively to the defence of minority cultures and languages is published in Esperanto.

JEAN-CLAUDE THUMERELLE
WARNETON, BELGIUM

Volapük, invented by a German cleric, Johann Martin Schleyer, was first published in 1879. It sought to be a synthesis of European mother tongues, but the roots on which it was based were so over-simplified that their origins were virtually unrecognizable. The word *Volapük*, for instance, is based on two English words, *world* and *speak*. Translated into Esperanto it becomes *mond-lingvo*.

During the short-lived vogue for Volapük at the Paris Congress of 1889 it seemed momentarily that the problem of an international language had been solved. However, as many Volapük speakers realized, reforms were necessary, but these were systematically resisted by Schleyer.

Esperanto appeared in 1887. Its inventor, Dr. Louis Zamenhof, laid its foundations but left its users to determine how the language would develop, under the watchful eye of an academy.

Volapük disappeared into oblivion. Esperanto on the other hand is still used on all five continents.

LUCIEN BOURGEOIS
PRESIDENT OF THE ESPERANTO
FEDERATION OF NORTHERN FRANCE
LILLE, FRANCE

I visited Lithuania in 1992. Thanks to my knowledge of Esperanto I was welcomed into families and was able to communicate with them. In 1993 I spent some time in the Czech Republic. Although I do not speak Czech, through Esperanto I established contact with many people and made new friends.

A. LEGROS
BONDY, FRANCE

Nearly all Esperantists are keen defenders of their regional and national languages, and it is because they want to defend their linguistic and cultural heritage that they use a neutral and supranational language, Esperanto, as their lingua franca.

I am a Dutch speaker and active in the movement to defend the sovereignty and survival of the Dutch language within the European Union, but for my numerous contacts outside The Netherlands I use Esperanto without encountering any problems or frustrations. Nor does this prevent me from speaking French, English or German when the need arises.

EDWARD SYMOENS
KALMTHOUT, BELGIUM

The goal of any sensible Esperantist is to safeguard and promote linguistic diversity. Esperanto should simply be a linguistic lift that can give people easy access to the different storeys of the Tower of Babel.

GERMAIN PIRLOT
OSTEND, BELGIUM

by Raoul Silva-Cacérès

Here comes THE SUN

Although not many of those who watched last February's Winter Olympics may have been aware of it, the Olympic flame that burned in Lillehammer (Norway) was a legacy of an ancient solar cult.

The sun is an omnipresent symbol in the history of civilization. It has been given many names—Helios, Ra, Shamash, Apollo, Sûrya, Amaterasu are only a few—and has been deified since the dawn of time. The fount of light and life, it came to symbolize truth, the all-seeing eye of justice and equality, and became associated with the power to heal physical and mental ailments.

The illustrations of sun-related objects in *The Sun: Eternal Flame of Creation*, many never before published, show how the sun has been an endless source of inspiration to the human imagination. They include the chariot of the sun-god; the vampire (destroyed by sunlight); sacred mirrors; mountains that became solar deities; the pyramids; various animals (birds of prey, serpents, lions and stags); the phoenix; trees such as the cosmic fig-tree, its roots upturned towards the sky; gold; and fire. Most religions, rites, social functions, cultural events, festivals and sports originate in ancient solar cults, or can be associated with the "day star" through ceremonies linked with agrarian and fertility rites.

This book evokes solar cults all over the world, focusing particularly on past cultures and the cultures of indigenous peoples today. An international team of twenty-four noted scholars has written the texts which accompany a pictorial record of outstanding quality.

In a remarkably comprehensive introduction of some 130 pages, the book's compiler and presenter, Madanjeet Singh—art historian, writer, painter and photographer—compares the different symbolic and artistic representations of the sun, points to some unexpected similarities between different cultures, and outlines the central issues underlying his research. "The comparison which some scholars have made between the Amerindian and Greco-Roman pantheons," he writes, "shows how solar cultures and their mythologies in widely separated parts of the world seem to converge, transcending both time and space, and manifest themselves continually in the global totality of form and content. It is at the heart of the controversy whether or not such similarities are coincidental or resulted from interaction between cultures. Perhaps in this inexplicable phenomenon lies the fundamental character of the prehistoric myth-making age and its cultural universality."

For the first time, here is a single work which lists, discusses and draws comparisons between symbolic and artistic representations of the sun from the earliest times to the present day, both in works of art and in the rituals of each of the major civilizations. This thoroughly entertaining geo-cultural travelogue takes the reader from Mesopotamia to the Incas of ancient Peru, via the medieval French epic *La chanson de Roland*.

Two examples may be given. The chapter (by French writer Jacques Lacarrière) devoted to representations of the sun in popular French culture is of particular interest. Most of these representations originate in Celtic folklore and an ancient animist tradition which forms a symbiosis between celestial phenomena and human beings. This complicity is strongly apparent in the popular legends of Brittany

The Sun: Eternal Flame of Creation

compiled and presented by Madanjeet Singh, with a preface by Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, UNESCO/Thames & Hudson, London/Adams, New York, 1993.

This monumental 400-page volume with 550 colour plates is being published simultaneously in six languages, within the framework of the World Decade for Cultural Development. It is the result of co-operation between UNESCO and seven of the world's largest publishing houses (Thames & Hudson, London, and Adams, New York, for the English edition; Bordas, Paris, for the French; Plaza & Janés/Circulo de Lectores, Barcelona, for the Spanish; Silvan, Milan, for the Italian; Wasmuth, Tübingen, for the German; and Kodansha, Tokyo, for the Japanese).

Price: 460 French francs (or equivalent in other currencies)

and in the torch festivals which take place on the first Sunday in Lent in the Christian calendar. To revive the energy of the weakening sun, flaming torches of straw were paraded through village streets and nearby pathways and orchards.

In the chapter dealing with the Aztecs of ancient Mexico, Eduardo Matos Moctezuma stresses the importance to this people of their creation myth, the *Leyenda de los Soles* (Legend of the Suns). The Aztecs considered themselves the chosen elite of the sun, and according to this tradition, the history of humanity was divided into four consecutive eras or "Suns": "The Tiger Sun", "The Wind Sun", "The Rain Sun" and "The Water Sun".

However, it was the fifth Sun, the "Sun of Movement", which allowed humanity, through the sacrifice of the gods, to become integrated with the world:

The Sun is not moving!

How in truth shall we make people live?

Let the Sun gain strength through our mediation,

Let us sacrifice ourselves, let us all die!

This demonstrates clearly the fundamental role of sacrifice in Aztec religion and society: man must offer up his life to the gods, so that the sun may continue on its course and cosmic harmony may be preserved.

In short, this book gives us a magnificent lesson in comparative mythology. Considered as a whole, this vast panorama reveals a poetic vision of history and a record of the hopes and frustrations of men and women past and present. The story of the sun is the story of an eternal dream of humanity.

To complement this historical and cultural study of the world of imagery inspired by the sun, UNESCO has decided to prepare a second volume, devoted to solar energy and the environment. ■

RAOUL SILVA-CACERES, of Chile, is a professor at the university of the Sorbonne (Paris IV), where he is in charge of doctoral studies in Latin American literature. Among his published works are *Elogio de mi locura* (1991; "In praise of my madness") and *L'arbre aux figures, Etude sur Julio Cortázar* ("The tree with faces, a study on Julio Cortázar").

RECENT RECORDINGS

by Isabelle Leymarie

JAZZ

Tom Scott. *Reed My Lips.* Scott (tenor sax), Eric Gale (guitar), David Witham (keyboards), Larry Kimpel (bass), Ron Aston (synth drums/percussion), *et al.* CD GRP 97592

On this Californian-style techno-funk CD, Scott gives a brilliant demonstration of the possibilities of electronic music. "Every Day and Every Minute" with vocals by Carmen Twiley, and "Saxapella" in which Scott plays several saxophones are especially interesting. "G.B.U.", the only track featuring an acoustic piano, reminds us of the atmosphere in some of the Crusaders' recordings. This is not intellectual music. It is pleasant and well performed, intended for relaxation and entertainment.

MUSIC FROM AROUND THE WORLD

The Slide Guitar. *Bottles Knives & Steel, vol. 2.* CD Columbia 4721921-10.

In its "Roots n'Blues" series Columbia continues to present the lesser known sides of the blues. On this CD are recordings made by artists from the southern United States in the 1920s and 1930s. The "bottleneck" style of guitar-playing was influenced by Hawaiian music but has a strong flavour of its own. This is an opportunity to listen to Salty Dog Sam and Tampa Red and a number of women performers including the early Helen Humes, and Nellie Florence, who soon faded from the limelight. These blues from the early days of recording tell of incidents of daily life, the problems of the Depression and the joys and frustrations of love. They constitute a wonderful chronicle of the South.

CLASSICAL

Marcus Klinko with the soloists and musicians of the Orchestra of the Paris-Bastille Opera House. *Debussy, Ravel, Satie, Fauré and Ibert.* CD EMI Classics 7 54884 2.

Here are several pieces from the early twentieth century, the heyday of the harp renaissance in France. As insipid as this instrument may sound in inexpert hands, it has a real presence here. All the pieces are superb, notably Ravel's flowing *Introduction and Allegro for Harp*, as light as if suspended in mid-air, Ibert's *Entr'acte* with its Slavic tones, and Fauré's romantic *Berceuse Op. 16.* Satie's *Deuxième Gymnopédie*, arranged for flute and harp by Robin de Smet, Ravel's *Pavane pour une infante défunte*, arranged for flute and harp by Quinto Maganini and Debussy's *En bateau*, adapted for flute and harp by Susanna Mildonian, thoroughly deserve their place in this harp anthology.

Gil Shaham, Göran Söllscher. *Paganini for Two.* CD Deutsche Grammophon 437 837-2

Some delightful works by Paganini, especially the *Romance* from the *Grand Sonata* and the *Cantabile*, performed on violin and guitar, both instruments that the maestro himself played brilliantly. In the *Allegro vivace a movimento perpetuo*, Gil Shaham demonstrates a blend of dazzling technical virtuosity and profound sensitivity, in a piece in which the guitar is limited to a supporting role. In the movements of the more measured *Sonata concertata*, however, the two instruments join with obvious relish in a dialogue on equal terms. ■

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Published monthly in 32 languages and in Braille by UNESCO, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

31, rue François Bonvin, 75015 Paris, France.

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1 year: 211 French francs. 2 years: 396 FF.
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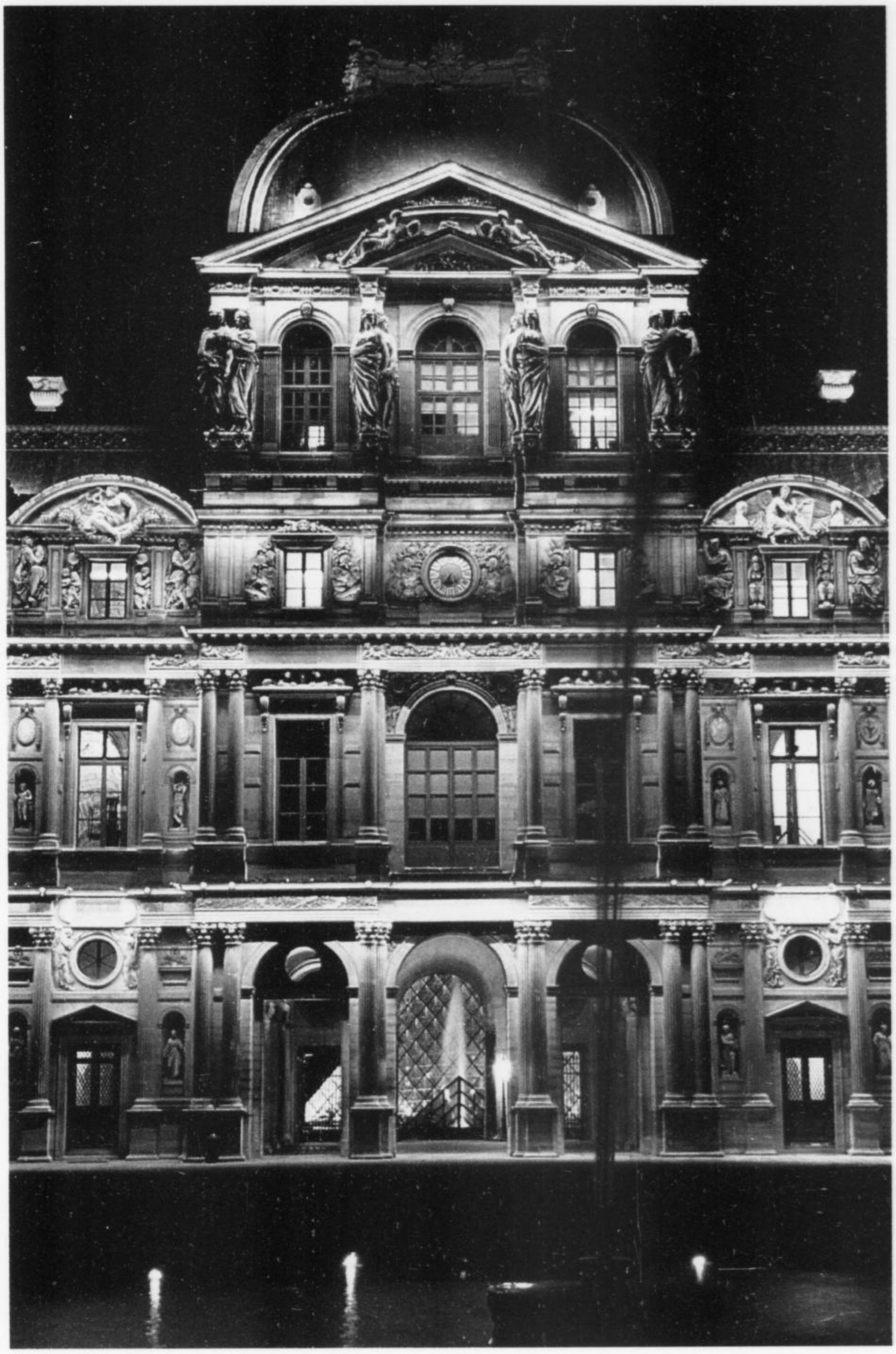
IMPRIMÉ AU LUXEMBOURG (Printed in Luxemburg)
DÉPOT LÉGAL: C1 -JUILLET/AOÛT 1994.
COMMISSION PARITAIRE N° 71842 - DIFFUSÉ PAR LES N.M.P.P.
Photocomposition, photogravure: Le Courrier de l'UNESCO.
Impression: IMPRIMERIE SAINT-PAUL, 2, rue Christophe-Plantin
L-2988 Luxembourg
ISSN 0041-5278 N° 7/8-1994-OPI-94-528A

This issue comprises 84 pages and two 4-page inserts between pages 10-11 / 74-75 and 42-43.



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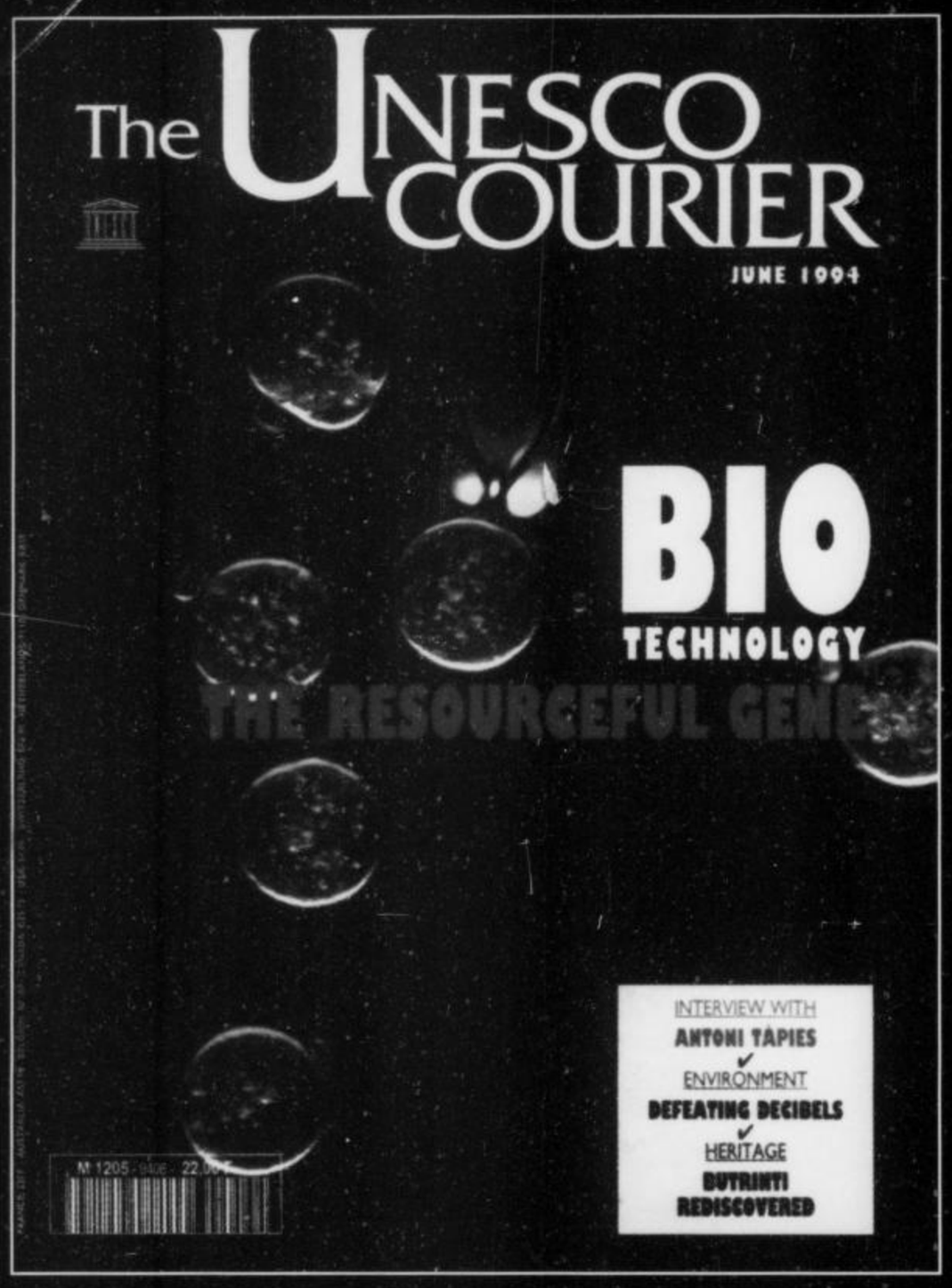

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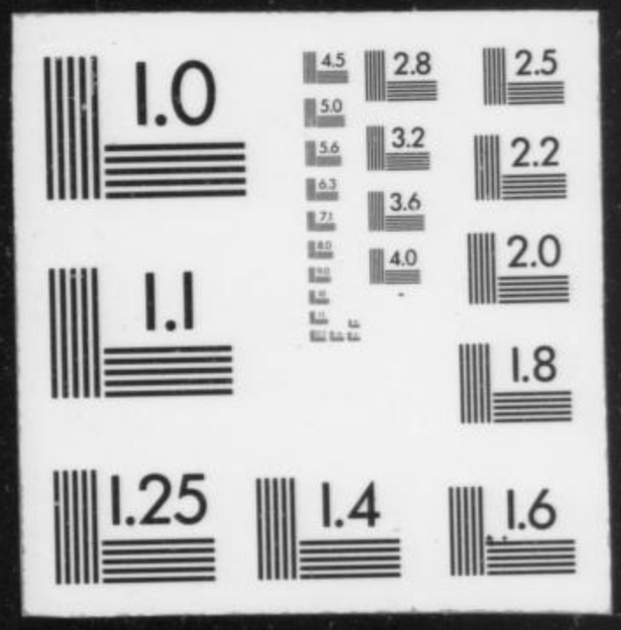
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